

/THE BULLETIN/

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF DECATUR COUNTY

Vol. 4 , No. 109 Greensburg, Indiana January 1987

OCCASION: Winter Meeting of the
Decatur County Historical Society

PLACE: Baptist Church
W. Washington St.
Greensburg, IN.

DATE: January 25, 1987
Sunday afternoon at
2:00 P.M.

PROGRAM: A play entitled, "A Visit to the Hoosier Schoolmaster" will be produced by members of the Society. The play is an adaption from THE HOOSIER SCHOOLMASTER written by Anna Jo Foley especially for this occasion. It will be an opportunity to see some of the top performers of this area in action. The setting for the book is Decatur County, called Hoopole, in a mythical community of Flat Creek near the town of Clifty, Milford to us. This will not be a Dinner Theatre, but will be a chance for some laughs, and to learn something about this historical Hoosier book and the author, Edward Eggleston. Refreshments will be served, I am almost sure.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Joe L. Owen, St. Paul, IN.
Charles R. Parker, N. Charleston,
South Carolina

MEMORIALS

In memory of Stanton Guthrie by
Robert D. Hall

GIFTS

Mildred West Braden

RED STAR TIME - If there's a Red Star on your address label, it's time to PAY your DUES for 1987

MUSEUM DONORS

Philip Diewert
Martha Linegar
Bernard Neinaber
Margaret Donnell Becker, Mrs.
Becker has given to the Museum
all of the fine artifacts she

had on loan at the Museum. This is a quite generous gift, and the Society is very appreciative of her generosity.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE - As 1986 comes to a close, and we are starting into 1987 I have some thoughts for our society.

1. We have one of the better county Museums in the state.
2. We have a good membership as far as numbers & donations of items to the museum is concerned.
3. We do need more volunteer workers to help with the general operation of the museum, that is, helping the curator, helping during the time we are open to the public, general maintenance of the building and grounds.
4. If it wasn't for a few dedicated persons, the museum just would not be. Some of these people are getting tired, if you would like to help, please call Lee Lauderdale (663-2769) or Jackie Mendenhall (663-8277).
5. At the last annual meeting, it was voted to raise the dues for 1987 to \$5 per member. This was done for 2 reasons, the cost of maintenance & utilities keep raising, also, the house will soon need a new roof. A new roof was put on the garage this fall.

* * * * *

FALL TOUR - by: Viola Minning

The fall tour of the Decatur County Historical Society was held on a beautiful Sunday afternoon, October 5, with 31 members and guests traveling by a bus to Lawrenceburg.

The first stop was the Dearborn County Court House which was built in 1872 and is a fine example of a Classical Revival building with a fluted Corinthian columned portico. Telford Walker, president of the

Dearborn County Historical Society, conducted the tour of the Dearborn County Museum which is located on the first floor of the court house, and pointed out their current special display of German costumes, musical instruments, dolls and many other items. Walker took the group to the second floor court room which features many beautiful stained glass windows donated in 1939 by members of the Bar to commemorate their fellow attorneys. The third floor court room was also visited affording a closeup window view of the ornate columns.

Lynn Slayback served as guide for the bus tour of the city, and pointed out many historic sites.

Founded in 1802 by Samuel C. Vance, Lawrenceburg quickly became a trading center for all of southeastern Indiana, utilizing both its proximity to the Ohio River and the early growth of the railroad to provide the necessary transportation. The entire downtown business district has been proposed for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. Vance's magnificent Federal style mansion, built around 1818, was pointed out by Slayback who said it was now owned by Lotus Warehouses and was not open to the public. The interior is graced by a circular stairway which connects all three floors of the home. In pre-levee days the palladian windows faced the river.

On the levee is a historic marker in remembrance of the day in 1861 when Abraham Lincoln, en route to his inauguration, made a brief speech from the back of his train.

Across the street from the court house is the former Lawrenceburg Woolen Mills built in 1866. During the huge flood of 1937, townspeople took shelter in the upper floors of this building and the court house. A plaque noting the high water mark is at the top of the second story of the court house.

The Jesse Hunt House, a hotel and restaurant which has been located in the same building since 1818, was said to be the first three-story building in Indiana.

The Hamline Chapel Methodist Church, erected in 1847, was funded by public collection regardless of religious affiliation.

A building which formerly housed a cigar factory in the mid-1800's was pointed out. Lawrenceburg was the tobacco and cigar making capital of the midwest for a number of years producing more than 5 million hand-rolled cigars in 1873.

The scene of a murder in 1820 was shown. Slayback told that a folk ballad is still sung about the tragic affair in which a young man was shot in a quarrel over the affections of a young lady.

Outstanding examples of early row houses, built from 1818 to 1830, exhibited interesting architectural details such as iron balconies and bay windows. Most of these were added in later years when traveling salesmen went door to door selling the "modern" amenities.

A beautiful Greek Revival home built by Judge Isaac Dunn about 1840 was contrasted to a much simpler one he built in 1818. A large white brick residence built in 1857 for Joanna Hunt was the scene of a gala party in 1865 honoring Civil War General William T. Sherman.

An outstanding example of Italianate design built around 1860 was the home of Civil War General Benjamin Spooner. The Queen Anne

style fire station was built in 1882 to house the city's first fire "engine". The stables were located in the rear of the building and the city offices upstairs.

The 1882 Queen Anne Beecher Presbyterian Church was named for Rev. Henry Ward Beecher, who began his preaching career in the old church pictured on a plaque which adorns the front of the present structure. He was visited here by his sister, Harriet Beecher Stowe, who according to local tradition, may have written portions of "Uncle Tom's Cabin" during her stay here.

A building which is now a funeral home was built in 1869 as a meeting hall for the Order of Druids and was decorated to resemble a real forest. It was later a billiard saloon and then was converted to an ice cream parlor and confectionary. At one time the third floor was a spacious auditorium, the home of the St. Cecilia Musicales, one of many such organizations which flourished at the turn of the century as testimony to the heavily German population's love affair with music. The St. Cecilia was forced to disband after the 1937 flood destroyed most of the town's pianos.

A small Baptist church was first organized in 1807. At one time the building had a bell tower. Several buildings were noted to have facings resembling intricately carved wood or stone which were actually made of cast iron and in most cases were added in the 1890's to modernize store fronts.

A stop was made at the Pot Pourri Shop which says "J. Pfalzgraf Saloon" on the front. Built prior to 1876 it retains its early charm and is now an antique and craft store. The group noted the ornate pressed tin ceiling.

After the bus tour, refreshments of cider, coffee and cookies were served at the court house museum by Adena Charlton, hostess and executive secretary for the museum, assisted by Viola Minning.

The group returned home by a scenic route thorough Aurora and bus driver Wayne Davis pointed out places of interest. The tour was arranged by Don Minning who was unable to attend. Viola Minning conducted the tour in his absence. (Sounds like the Fall Tour was quite an interesting affair. Lawrenceburg certainly has a number of historic sites to visit.)

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IN REMEMBRANCE OF AN OLD FRIEND

by:

William Parker

Among the articles I have written over the years for the Bulletin you have heard me mention "Old Billie" and possibly wonder why. To begin, Billie was a member of our home before I was and lived with us for over twenty five years. He was also an important member and demanded only some corn, oats, and hay in exchange for many miles of transportation.

In the early days of our country up to the perfection of the automobile and the railroad, ox or horse power was the only means of moving goods and people. Naturally, most lots in Greensburg had a barn down on the alley containing at least two horse stalls, a hay mow and a shed on one end to store a buggy or a spring wagon, which

might be an early version of the pick-up truck, and in some of the more prosperous homes a fringed-top surrey or carriage.

The supply of buggies then was as great as the supply of automobiles is now. The Greensburg Carriage Factory made many vehicles until it burned down, one of the largest fires I remember. It was never rebuilt. George Montgomery and son, Roy, had a shop east of the Odd Fellows Home where they made and repaired buggies, spring wagons, hearses for most of the funeral directors in this part of the state until they burned out. Then they moved to west Main Street in town. The turnover in buggies was fairly great - runaways, collisions with gate posts, upsets, lack of lubricants on the axles, how they could squall. We found the unused, leftover bottle of castor oil good for buggy axles, as well as other things. Any local blacksmith could rebuild a wheel, replace tires, springs, and curtains. As our family increased, there was Father, Mother myself, and a younger brother, we began to get cramped for room, so we ordered a larger buggy from Sears, Roebuck and Co. It would seat three comfortably, a side spring job and rode very easy. How we watched and waited for the notice from the freight house that it had arrived in Greensburg. After we got it home and assembled and Billie hitched up, we immediately noticed he looked smaller and the buggy larger, but he did not object, and we were so much more comfortable. We took off for Milroy, Dad, Mom, and I on the the seat, and Robert on a little wooden box on the floor at the usual speed of six miles per hour. We immediately named it the Palace Car.

Many of the older folks favored a buggy called a Phaeton, much lower so it was easier to get in and out of. Mr. White had a buggy, the only one I ever saw with a fifth wheel on both front and rear axles, connected with cross rods so it could be turned around in little more than its own length, no cramping or upsetting. The young men of those days were just as proud of their gleaming harness and shiny buggies and the young men of today are of their sports cars.

We had draft horses on the farms and in the cities to do the heavy work and moving. The driving or buggy horse, a trotter or pacer, usually a descendant of some famous blood line. And let's not forget the Shetland Pony, the favorite of the children.

With so many horses, we had many people dealing in horses, called horse traders. They could be found around the livery stables. Their descendants can be found down at the corner used car lot.

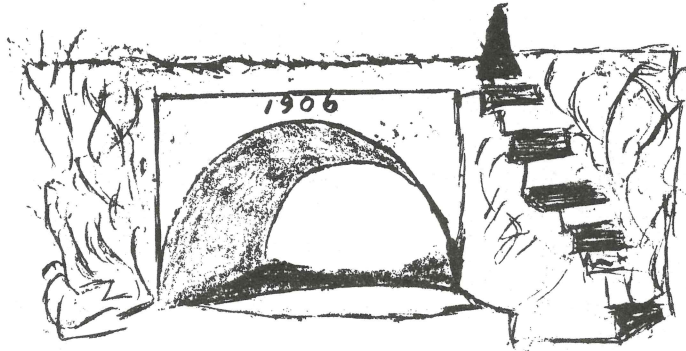
Billie did not fit in any of the above categories. He arrived in Greensburg among a carload of western horses, a mixture of bronco, cayuses, and Indian ponies, all sizes, shapes and colors. Billie must have been a combination of all of them, short, compact body, short legs, and an ugly brownish yellowish color with a large burn scar on the left hip. This scar was always tender. Bear down a little hard on the curry comb and you were aware of it. Only paid twenty dollars for him, so we had nothing to lose, but he did turn out fine. He never kicked anyone or ran off too often, seldom was sick except when he got in the feed box, and he accepted the auto early. Dad never had to get out and lead us around a car. Billie had good eyes and insisted on seeing everything going on so we never used blinders on his bridle. He was also very opposed to a buggy whip, we we seldom carried one. Mother used him to do her shopping or visit friends, and he was well known all over town. He took us

on many trips to visit relatives in Rush and Shelby Counties and down to our farm in Clay Township. He never refused.

As he grew older, Dad gradually retired him down on the farm, and when I returned from World War I, he was gone. I never asked about him.

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THE RAILROAD UNDERPASSES



There are two Railroad Underpasses in Decatur County - one at New Point, the other near Lake McCoy. Another is about one mile east of the Decatur County line in Franklin County, another at Batesville, one at Morris east of Batesville, and yet another nears Spades. These bridges were constructed of concrete and bear the date 1906. They surely were built very sturdy to have withstood 80 years of wear. During the Hey-day of the railroads they withstood hundreds of tons of traffic each day as the rumbling trains passed over them.

First a little background on this railroad, known as the Cincinnati and Indianapolis Ry. Trains began to run from Lawrenceburg to Greensburg in 1853. Records show that the first 12 miles of track had been laid by October 14, 1852. The first train to pull into Indianapolis over this line did so on November 1, 1853. There was only a single track at that time.

A much better means of transportation was available with the coming of the railroads. They furnished employment for many local people. There were however some problems created - people were not accustomed to look out for trains, and accidents did happen. Even farm animals that were near the tracks were injured.

This reminds me of an old story about a farmer near New Point whose 2-year old steer was hit and killed by a train on June 20th, 1855. He filed a claim for his loss with Joel Colson, who was the first Railroad agent at New Point. The claim was settled for \$15.00. Maybe the Cowcatcher on the engine was not working properly. Note: Definition - Cowcatcher: 'A strong frame in front of the locomotive, for removing obstructions, such as strayed cattle and the like from the rails'.

Later, the railroads had to build fences on each side of the right-of-way to keep off wandering stock.

During the next 50 years, railroads underwent tremendous expansion, increasing the 15,000 miles of track to almost 200,000 miles. Here, it was necessary to build another track alongside the

existing one. In someplaces they ran into trouble getting the right-of-way. I remember my father telling that New Point citizens complained about the railroad taking one of their streets - Railroad Street, which ran parallel to the first track.

Then I cam across another story in a letter written by a man who is now 97 years old. He said that surveyors wanted to reroute the right-of-way, which would take it thru an old cemetery in which was interred the body of the wife of Willis Maple. Willis objected to this, and came out there with his shpt-gun and sat there until the surveyors were persuaded to change the route.

The underpass bridges no doubt helped to prevent many accidents. Most of the bridges were probably built for a different reason - to eliminate the steep grades and to create a more level track.

Many people were killed and injured and at the other crossings and in other railroad accidents. Twenty six people from my home area, New Point and its environs died as the result of railroad accidents. Three men from one family died, each in a separate accident within a period of one year. I presume that like occurances took place in other localities where the railroads passed thru.

Getting back to the underpasses - vehicles with extra height must beware. I remember one Semi that couldn't make it under the New Point underpass. His top got stuck under it and he had to back up with great difficulty.

These bridges were surely built to last and it is sad to see these monuments of the past used as billboards for the graffiti of these uncaring individuals who seemingly have nothing better to with their time and abilities.

By: Raymond Carr

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Up until 1924 it was thought by the people of Greensburg that the tree on the tower was a silver maple. Many of the trees planted along the streets and in the Courthouse park were maples. Then one of the County Commissioners picked up a leaf in the park that had fallen from a basswood or linden tree growing in the park. This was unfamiliar to him so he sought the assistance of the professor mentioned in the attached clipping. They correctly identified the leaf but were mistaken about its source. However linden was more poetic than maple. So the high school year book was called the Linden.

In August of 1932, I was one of the unemployed of the depression, working about 12 hours a day cuting fire wood and trying to run a small fix-it shop and clearing less than I would have made on WPA. I was also scoutmaster of the local troop. One day I saw the steeple-jack mentioned in another clipping working on the tower. I talked him into letting me go up on the tower to look at the tree. While there I cut several small limbs from the tree and hid them in my shirt. It seemed that it was forbidden to do this. When I got home, I checked the leaves I had gotten against the Boy Scout Handbook and decided that they were from either a big toothed aspen or a silver poplar (a close cousin of the aspen). Both trees are native but the poplar is more common. I sent some of the leaves and limbs to Purdue University for identification. It was determined that the tree on the courthouse tower was indeed a big toothed aspen. When I notified the County Commissioners, the City Council, the Chamber of Commerce and the local newspaper of this finding, nobody wanted to believe it. Aspen seemed to be not as poetic as linden,

and "big toothed"!!!! But somebody sent off some of the leaves and twigs, which I supplied, to the Smithsonian. I was not thanked for upsetting the local legend, and the newspaper pointedly never mentioned my name.

By: Philip Deiwert

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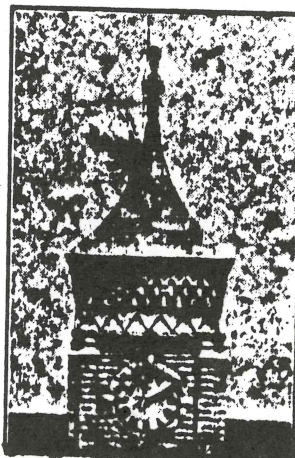
What Greensburg Has

1. State I. O. O. F. Home.
2. Interurban lines.
3. State highways in five directions.
4. A fine Y. M. C. A. building.
5. A large modern high school building.
6. A magnificent library building.
7. Well equipped Memorial Hospital.
8. Modern railroad station.
9. Four good banks in fine quarters.
10. Many up-to-date stores with magnificent stocks in all lines.
11. Railroads in five directions.
12. Several mills and elevators, some manufacturing concerns.
13. The Standard Casket Hardware Co.
14. Good churches with good plants.
15. A new gymnasium, will seat 2,500.
16. Strong fraternal organizations.
17. The C. J. Loyd & Co. poultry plant, one of the largest poultry shipping plants in the United States.
18. Kova Brush and Broom Mfg. Co.
19. Cyclone Fence Co.
20. Reliance Manufacturing Co.

(Courtesy of Greensburg Chamber of Commerce)

GREENSBURG, INDIANA

The Tower Tree City



Extends a welcome to
Sovereign Grand Odd Fellows, General Military
Council, Association of Rebekah Assemblies
upon visitation to State I. O. O. F. Home,
Sunday, Sept. 14, 1930.

MEMBERSHIPS and MEMORIALS

Historical Society of Decatur County, Inc.
P.O. Box 163 Greensburg, IN. 47240

Yearly Membership \$5.00
Life Membership \$100.00

Payable by January 1st.

☐ Renewal ☐ New ☐ Gift ☐ Life

NAME _____ ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

IF GIFTS: From _____ Address _____

MEMORIALS

In Memory of _____ Comments _____

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2nd. V. Pres.....Readawn Metz
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/THE BULLETIN/

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF DECATUR COUNTY

Vol. 4 , No. 110 Greensburg, Indiana APRIL 1987

OCCASION: Twenty-eighth Annual
Dinner Meeting.

DATE: Saturday, April 11th.
1987 at 6:30 P.M.

DINNER: Ladies of the Presby-
terian Church. The
Dinner is \$5.00 each.
Please reserve by
check. Send it to
Ruth McClintic, 632
W. First St. Greensburg,
IN. The deadline is the
evening of April 8th.

PROGRAM: A panel discussion conduct-
ed by several members of the Society.
The moderator will be Pat Smith, a
director of the local organization.
This will cover several aspects of
county history. It is bound to be
very entertaining, and may touch
on some things that aren't too
well known. Of course there is a
fine dinner to fall back on.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Mrs. Donald (Jean) Oljace
Mrs. Fred (Helen) Craig
Jane F. Murphy- Columbus, IN.
Loren Marlowe
John Stewart
Mrs. John (Alberta) Stewart
Elbert Spillman
Howard Parker
Mrs. Stanley(Elizabeth)Reed
Mrs. Darol (Toni) Collins
Mabel M. Webb-Indianapolis

THANK YOU, a big one to DELTA
FAUCET for being so generous in
printing and assembling The
Bulletin for the Historical
Society, and all free of charge.

MUSEUM OPENING - will be on Mem-
orial Day, and be open Friday &
Sunday afternoons, 1-4 P.M.
thru September.

FOR SALE-There are still copies
of the New Decatur County History
Book & the reprint of the Harding's
History of Decatur County for sale
at Maddux's Auction Barn.

WINTER MEETING was held at the
Baptist Church, Sunday afternoon
Jan. 25th with over 125 faith-
ful members and guests in atten-
dance. The program consisted of
a play put on by members of the
Society. The play was an adap-
tion from the Hoosier School-
master, written and directed by
Anna Jo Foley. She did a fine
job. The performers got by
without any vegetables being
thrown. In all, the program
was quite well received by an
enthusiast audience. As of this
date, there has been no clamor
for a repeat performance. A
fine spread of refreshments were
provided by a committee of Diana
Springmeyer, Rheadawn Metz, Mary
Doles, Ruby Ernstes, Steve
Stradley, & Lorena Maddux.
Performers were:
Jim Smith Duane Maddux
Van Batterton Bill Hunter
Marge Hunter Juanita Beall
Rheadawn Metz Henry Ernstes
Allan Beall John Parker
Oliver Hunter Mary Lou Bausback
Nancy Gilliland Ralph Swegman
Ryan Maddux Marlin Maddux
Peg Miller Morgan Miers
Orville Pitts Diana Swegman
Bill Robbins Earl Vanderbur
Gloria Austin, narrator.

MEMORIAL

In memory of Elizabeth Woodfill,
a charter member, from Mrs. W.
Hunter Robbins.

=====

An Arkansas farmer and bird hunter
went into East Texas for some bird
shooting. He arranged with a Texas farmer
who was also an avid bird hunter
with lots of ground cover and
birds to spend a pleasant day
hunting.

While they were talking over a
bourbon and branch, the Arky told
his companion that his dog laying
**CONTINUED on page 7, see FARMER

THE EXPLOSION

By:

WILLIAM PARKER

The Natural Gas field of Indiana composes about twenty five hundred square miles, a part of eastern Indiana about one hundred miles long by seventy miles wide with an irregular outline. It is divided in a north section and a south section. The south section is composed of Marion, Hancock, Henry, Wayne, Rush, Shelby and Decatur Counties, with Decatur County being the southern tip.

This field is underlaid with a dolomite limestone rock called Trenton rock. This is found eight to nine hundred feet below the surface and is the rock holding the gas. Some parts of the field contain trenton which is very porous and in our county it is very hard. When the drill penetrates it, the gas escapes slow so the strongest flow is in the north section, which was depleted first.

Experimental drilling was commenced in latter 1870 for coal, but gas was discovered and the gas boom soon started. Companies were organized, speculators took over the drilling was fast and furious.

In Greensburg, three gas companies were in operation. First, the Greensburg Natural Gas Company with twenty five wells. Second, Greensburg Gas and Electric Company with thirty wells. And then the Muddy Fork Gas Company with thrity five wells. Average depth was eight hundred and fifty to nine hundred feet. At this time there were also companies operating in Clarksburg, New Point, Adams, St. Paul, Sandusky and Westport and a hundred or more private wells sunk and owned by farmers for their individual use. In addition I find ten more in the county, one Newton Natural Gas Company, Dallie Tillson owner, Florine's Father.

I grew up in Greensburg around the turn of the century, as a bountiful supply of natural gas was available to all the citizens of the city for lighting, cooking and some heating in cold weather. We used wood and later a big base burner that burned anthracite coal. This gas was run through a gas meter and sold for fifteen cents per thousand cubic feet, which was very reasonable. Stanley Knarr was the meter reader. Many older citizens will remember him walking up and down the streets with his cane and leather putties to protect him from the unfriendly dogs. Of all the unhandy places to place a gas meter, ours was in the corner of the press in our living room. Stanley had our permission to come in and read the meter without knocking. Dad had a big strong woman caring for my mother at the time and she came in the room and saw the rear end of a man protruding from the press and was about to tackle him when he emerged with his flashlight and explained who he was. I wonder if it is still there. Much of this Greensburg gas was from right at home, for several wells were drilled within the city limits. I think I could find some of them, but I doubt that they are still producing.

The farmers of our county also shared the privilege of using cheap fuel. In many localities, every well to do farmer had his own individual gas well. Since Clara and I went to housekeeping in

1921, in the southeast corner of Clay Township, we have had gas wells all around us, about one every half mile or closer. We held out until 1935, when Dad decided it was time to drill, so we secured the services of Mr. Tom Castor, of Sardinia. He was an experienced driller who still had his own well rig powered by an upright steam engine. With Tom as driller and his son as fireman, we have a gaswell eight hundred and sixty five feet deep showing two hundred and fifty to three hundred pounds of rock pressure. Drilled about eight or nine feet into trenton, the gas holding rock. The driller is very careful to avoid drilling through the trenton, which could let salt water fill the well. This is a matter of a little experience or just pure luck, as the thickness of the layer varies at different places. We piped the gas in our home and east to my brother Robert's home some one half mile. We laid the axes and cross cut saws away and have not cut a stick of wood since. We have used this for nearly fifty two years without any problems, no leaks or rusted pipes. We are very thankful.

It is surprising so few accidents have happened, and these that did occur have been mostly caused my poor house plumbing. The supervisor of Natural Gas says, "The condition of some of the pipe lines extending over parts of the field is bad, especially in what is known as farmers plants. Leaks can be found at nearly every joint. These have been laid down hastily and by inexperienced men".

The worst accident I can think of in Greensburg was the explosion at Minears Store. Gas was detected in the basement and Jim Dashiell was called to investigate. He went to the basement with a lighted candle and soon found it. The back end of the store landed in the alley, two clerks were seriously injured and Jimmy fortunately was not badly hurt, only lost his hair. This was many years ago.

In many parts of the field we find gas escaping through the earth and bubbling up through the water in streams. I don't know for I have not been there for over fifty years, but at one time, just below where Rodney Creek joined Sandcreek in Marion Township, gas was bubbling up. Enough of the boys kept it lit most of the time. The great upheaval of earth and rocks and the explosion which followed, south of Waldron near the Van Pelt Cemetery, August 11, 1890, was attributed to the gas escaping through the shales and leaks below the packers from the wells at Waldron and St. Paul. The gas escaping literally through the shales, collected until the pressure became so great to cause the upheaval. This was an event of great interest and was visited by many people. I recall hearing my parents tell of driving over from Milroy, before they were married, to view this explosion site. Also, the pond in Flatrock at Downeyville was said to have been formed by a gas blowout. The waste from these causes has resulted to vast injury, by reducing the pressure and allowing the introduction of salt water into the wells, which ruins the well.

It might be well to mention some of the more prominent men who drilled these wells. I will have to do this from memory as I remember them, for I have no list. I will probably leave out some who should be included. Most of the county wells were dug by local people. The earliest was no doubt, Noah Dashiell and his son Jim, and they were active for many years. In Greensburg there was Burney Rimstead, who was also a well shooter, and his partner Ira Bird. Benny was a nephew of Noah. Arthur Rimstead was a good friend of mine and a

classmate at the old west building. Claude Conquest was also very active in the business. In Adams there was Captain Walker, Web Wright and Raymond Longstreet. In Sardinia there was Tom Castor, who dug our well. Probably his last. When the big rush for gas was on, the drillers worked around the clock, taking Sunday off. Originally, they had four legged wooden derricks put together with wrought nails and moving them from well to well. Later, they used a single long wood mast with guy wires for bracing. Power was usually steam. An eight or ten inch pipe to stone, then dropping off to six inches to shut water out. Tubing was usually two inch iron or wrought iron pipe and went down to trenton with a packer or sealer on the end, and if everything worked you had a dry well with plenty of gas and no water. I forgot to mention Willie McCarty, who dug mostly water wells but did drill two gas wells in our community in the 1950's with good results.

I mentioned previously that the trenton rock in the north half of the gas belt was very porous, the gas flowing easily out of the rocks pores, while in the southern section was very hard with no pores. This was especially noticeable in Decatur County. Someone came up with the idea that if you would blow this stone with a high explosion, cracks and fissures would result and the gas would escape into the well. Nitroglycerin was tried and worked well, this is a highly explosive, oily liquid, prepared by the action of nitric and sulfuric acids upon glycerine. Before this explosive was available commercially, a few gas well drillers made their own. Among them was Noah Dashiel, living three miles north of Greensburg on State Road 3. He had his operation on the east side of his farm on Muddy Fork. He stored this is hay mows and various out buildings on the farm. His formula: Cook ammonia and natural fat, probably lard or tallow mixed with sulfuric and nitric acids and glycerine. This mixture created considerable heat, so he had to have water available for cooling. It sounds hazardous to me. The only other man who manufactured this explosive in our county was Phillip (Smooth Bore) Mowerer, who had his operation below Turner's Corner, along Sand Creek. I wonder if he could be the Phillip Mowerer I went to school with in the old east end school in Greensburg.

Before autos and trucks, the explosives were transported by horse power. A spring wagon was fitted up with racks or cradles where the cannisters of explosives were strapped in. I have seen them traveling over the county and do not remember any danger signs on them. Later on the trucks, "EXPLOSIVES" and "DANGEROUS" in large letters was visible.

On arriving at the well, the shooter would sit a tripod over the well and lower the cans with a winch, very carefully. Then the go devil was prepared, a piece of round iron rod resembling a window weight with a hole bored in it to accept a stick of dynamite, capped with enough fuse to allow the go devil to reach the bottom before exploding. The fuse was lit and the go devil dropped, usually a small child of the family was granted the honor. Mom was selected, but was afraid she could not get away fast enough, so John Elie dropped it. In a few seconds, mud, water, rock shot in the air fifty or sixty feet. Tom Castor lit a broom and lit the gas which blazed up ten or fifteen feet. A Mr. Baker, who shot wells over

Ohio, Kentucky and Indiana for the American Glycerine Company, shot our well with sixty quarts, an average shot. Even the empty nitro cans were very dangerous and were destroyed by shooting with a rifle, sometimes blowing a hole in the ground four feet deep.

The nitro glycerine magazine was a little building owned by the explosive company on a little plot leased from Noah Dashiell. It was due west one fourth mile of State Road 3, in line with Noah's drive. Ira Bird was a licensed well shooter and had charge of the magazine. When his stock would get down to two hundred quarts, he would order five hundred more. The nitro came in ten quart, tall, square cans. Bird had a Model T pickup truck with a special padded box for transporting the explosive. Herbert Storms, an employee at the American Glycerine Company of Bradner, Ohio, was delivering Mr. Bird's order and had arrived at the magazine shortly after five o'clock P.M. on December 27, 1918, so it was probably dusk or dark. For some unknown reason the entire seven hundred quarts of nitro and some dynamite exploded in a terrific blast heard and felt all over central Indiana. Most people thought it was an earthquake. Only small bits of Mr. Storms and the truck were found. The remains of Mr. Storms were placed in a small shoe box and Mr. Bird delivered them to the widow and child at Bradner, Ohio. The blast rocked the entire countryside, shattering windows in homes within two miles. One plate glass window in a store in Milroy was broken. All the windows in the Dashiell home were broken. The tenant house on the west side of the road, and nearest to the blast, was occupied by Henry Hicks and family was badly damaged. The summer kitchen was blown away. Later Mrs. Hicks stated, "Mr. Hicks usually helped the driver unload the nitro and had just started down to the magazine. He stopped and returned to the house, just as he reached the steps and porch roof fell down and he had to use the other door. The kitchen cabinet was on the floor with everything spilled". As with tragedies of this kind, hundreds of people visited the scene and was a topic of conversation for months, and you still hear it mentioned occasionally. Besides the loss of life, the truck, the window panes, there was the loss of money from the explosive, which was now two dollars and fifty cents per quart, which is about seventeen hundred and fifty dollars.

Perhaps I should mention something about the size of the crater blown in the ground. Estimates ranged from fifteen feet up to forty feet, and a diameter of forty feet. I feel a depth of forty to fifty feet might be nearer right.

My son John, while measuring crops for the A.S.C., visited this site several times in the last few years and says that in spite of happening sixty eight years ago and being used as a family dump, it is still a very sizeable crater. Loren Sefton now owns the farm. After the explosion, the magazine was moved to the Bob Ramer farm, later owned by Thelma Bird. After a law suit, it was placed on the Thornburg farm, south on the Millhousen Road until it was abandoned locally. What few wells being drilled were shot by a shooter from the American Cyanide Company, bringing his nitro with him. Dynamite is still available locally, usually at the stone quarries and I understand proof of need has to be given. There was a little stone building east of the fire station where Ira Bird stored dynamite, it may still be there.

There are still many private farmer's wells in the county, furnishing some gas, mostly used for cooking, water heating and some heating. Greensburg is well supplied by gas piped in from Texas by the big and little inch lines which cross the south part of our county and brought in by the Indiana Gas Company.

In 1974, the Shawnee Oil and Gas Corporation of Texas came in and leased several hundred acres in Clay Township for gas exploration and drilled at least twelve wells, some with a fairly good flow. These did not meet their expectations for commercial use and were turned over to the farmer.

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THE BOY NEXT DOOR (Dr. Jewett)

By: C.A. Patton

When we moved out to the new house on East Main Street that Pulse and Son built for Grandpa and Grandma I was still in short pants. From April to November one wore only shirt, belt and pants; underwear, stockings, shoes, etc. belonged to Winter. A yard or so from my upstairs room was a maple tree to which soon became attached a rope, by which you could swing to the picket fence next door. This was a quicker exit than by the stairs and less observed by the family. If the rope was in the window it ment: at home, if on the fence, it ment away some where. The fence, a picket one, separated us from Jewetts. Against this fence was a demounted affair which we would today call a trailer. It had been used in selling pattert medicine and at times to take and sell tintypes, at county fairs. It was then used as a warehouse to store telephones invented before Bell brought out his electric one. These of Jewett's were not electric apparatus but depended on vibration illustrated by listening to a distant train by putting your ear to the rail, or scratching one end of a bamboo pole and listening to the sound plainly audible that could not be heard through the air. The senior Jewett, this showed, was a dabler in chemicals which he used in photography and in compounding his patented cure-all which he manufactured on the spot, as well as an inventor. He had whiskers and was seldom seen. His wife wore blue jeans and a mans shirt that hung out. A common sight a few years back but at that time was unknown. The two older children had left the nest and there was Earl the lad a couple of years older than me.

A couple of years is a lot of difference at that age, later on would amount to nothing. There are boys that are outstanding to other boys. I remember one lad that could move his scalp like a horse that wants to shake off a horse fly that it can't switch with its tail. A phenomenon and his control was startling. Must have made a weird effect upon a teacher looking at one of his pupils to see the boys forehead practically disappear, the hair above come down to the eyebrows and transform him momentarily into a Neanderthal pigmy. Another lad could wiggle his ears. Have since learned that all normal people have muscular equipment extending above and behind the ear which at one time was used principally to cock the ear like a dog. But this boy was different. Earl Jewett could whistle like nobody you ever heard. His range was astounding. He was tone perfect, he could charm a bird, he could imitate the chime whistle that blew every

day at Emmerts mill telling the weather we were to have. He was a quiet lad, had no enemies, but had no group of friends, came home late at night, and there are nights that you can hear footsteps far down the street. Italian opera, alpine horns, Swiss yodlers stopped suddenly by a blue jay cursing a robbin and ending with some devine notes of the cantor in the temple.

Grover Cleveland was no longer president, I had left the old town and had lived many years in each of two cities, my people have died and I have grown older and older, but at no time did I ever hear a word of Earl, and never wondered what became of him. Today I received a paper from the old town telling of the death of Earl Jewett, described as Doctor, Soldier, Manager of a Telephone Company bearing his name, Churchman, Mason, Shrine, Scottish Rite, Father, Grandfather, passing through the final gate and on his way.

Lately I read where some scientist stating that sound does not cease traveling but continues on and comparing its slow speed with electricity and light stated that he anticipated the time when one would be able to listen to sounds made before we were born.

I can picture some young boy twisting the dials of his sound recovery instrument and idely picking up Lincoln's Memorial Address, the oration over Ceaser and then the strangest whistling concert of a lonely boy down the street of a sleeping town at he trudges homeward, with only a cold moon and frosty roof tops to catch the sound and I am sure that the boy of the future will not turn off the concert until it is completely finished. (1958)

#

FARMER (continued from page 1)

there on the floor was the best bird dog in the country. The Texan allowed as how he had some good dogs, but what will yours do?

About that time a boy passed by and the Arky's dog hit a perfect point on the boy. "See what I tole you, that boy has a quail in his pocket." "Hey, boy, come here," "You got a quail in your Pocket?"

"No, sir". "Did you have quail for lunch?" "No, sir." "When did you last see a quail?" "Not for six months sir." "What's your name boy?" "Bob White, sir."

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(This stories continues on Page 6)

LODGES

by:

Bob Mitchell, St. Paul

The tragic collapse at the Elk's Lodge sharpens the focus on a bit of our history that we have experienced in our short life time. We are tempted to forget the importance of "recent" history and the value of institutions that only last a generation or two. One thing comes to mind that over the past 85-100 years has budded, flowered, and now comes almost full circle, which was tremendously important and influential in the development of Indiana.

No single institution in our life time has come and gone, leaving it's mark more indelibly than the fraternal order and it's attendant social structure.

There are over 2000 towns in Indiana with fewer than 3500 population and nearly every one has to thank the various "lodges" for it's distinctive skyline, it's social, and yes, it's moral culture.

In the latter 19th century and well into the 20th century, fraternal orders blossomed and left their mark on the people of Indianalike no other movement did. In the early days of the State, the saloon and the church lived side by side, each branding its mark on the citizens, and each still going strong. The fraternal order, however, flourished in the young social order by virtue of it's almost universal appeal. "Mamma's Church " and "Papa's Lodge" became almost synonymous in the eyes of the generation which grew up during the period.

The lodges were numbered by the dozens, and were all different, yet had a similarity that was almost uncanny. The coupling of a Latin pledge with a Biblical quotation, joined by secrecy was the cement that locked the bonds of brotherhood. The meetings, (so I am told) were equally similar with their "keeper of the portal", the "potentate" and the official dress paraphernalia. Make no mistake about it, this was a serious business and every "brother" took the vows as a covenant.

That the "lodge" was an influence on the moral culture of society is obvious if only viewed from a time consideration. Where "Mama's" Church met on Sunday morning, Sunday evening, and Wednesday evening, "Papa's" lodge was a full six days and nights. There was even talk about certain members of certain lodges who were suspected of a little Sabbath Day diversion, but perhaps those tales were exaggerated. The family was included in the social functions, however, and nearly every lodge has its attendant "Auxillary" which gave it an air of respectability, and often helped explain Papa's lengthy evenings at the "hall".

There developed during the late years of the 19th century, stretching well into the 20th, a regular competition between rivaling lodgers to out-build the other. The Classic style can still be seen in nearly every town, under numerous coats of paint and obscured by false moderninity of aluminum awnings. Taking the Romanesque as a model, the 20th century fraternal architect changed the windows to tall, arched, keystone type; added a frieze and a

cornice liberally sprinkled with graphics and symbols; and he planted this on the main street of Indiana.

Every town had a least one, and many has two, three or even four. Every facade told the same story and the major difference became the affluence of height. The more affluent lodges had three stories, even four, while the poorer neighbors had to do with two. Always there were two. The "ground" floor of course never had the real "lodge" accouterments. Those, due to the utmost secrecy were always locked securely in the "meeting" room, safe from prying eyes, on one of the upper floors. No, the ground floor had numerous and interesting uses, one of which was to house the local billiard table. No doubt there were many with what we would call the "pool hall atmosphere" today, but the billiard table was a much more genteel and acceptable piece of equipment for the lodge. Many of Papa's evenings, it is feared, never got above the ground floor, although there was seldom any trouble associated with the "hall".

The "socials" at the lodge hall were monthly events which were accompanied by much excitement among the small fry. Surely Mama's role was much less enthusiastic in the social, as all the food was brought in "pitch-in" style, and the hall's kitchen equipment did not include electric stoves and refrigerators.

Yet there was much vieing among the ladies for the "ohs" and "ahs" drawn for a particular dessert or casserole. Many times there was dancing to the accompaniment of the local pianist or a collection of string musicians. At other times the entertainment might consist of a visiting comedian or amateur theatrical group, as many of the buildings were equipped with an elevated stage.

The "Lodge Hall" became the center of activity for the community through the week like the "Church" on Sunday, and served as a common meeting place. Even rival lodges joined forces when outside influence threatened either the rights of tranquility of the citizens. From time to time cults and movements were born or moved into a community only to be driven out by the combined forces of all the lodges in town, after which they promptly went back to their jealous fighting among themselves. Even political beliefs were not allowed to intrude on the peaceful "brotherhood" of a lodge. If a member simply couldn't agree with a brother of the opposite political conviction, he would simply disappear from one lodge to surface in another. Thus musical chairs of membership became a practice that was prompted by a neighborhood squabble. However, no stranger could penetrate the solidarity of the small town lodge.

Two almost diametrically opposite changes occurred in our society which have had much to do with the demise of the fraternal lodge. One, the automobile brought mobility to the villages which freed lodge members of the isolation of his town. The second, and possibly the more menacing, was the radio, father of TV, which with its regular programming made home a desirable place to stay and spend the evening. After all, one simply didn't miss Amos and Andy! Many a church service or lodge meeting time was changed to overcome the absenteeism caused by their appealing schedule.

The current tennants of these majestic structures are as varied as the towns that support them. Every concivable type of commercial business has been founded in the local lodge hall of recent years. Even churches, funeral parlors and professional offices have used their shelter. Some have been converted into living quarters. Each successive tennant, although adding his bit to the preservation of the building, never-the-less takes his toll of it's life.

And so, during a single generation, a great social climate was created by the various lodges of Indiana. The skyline of every town was dotted with the buildings which are now rapidly succumbing to attrition either by the bull-dozer, the match, or, as the Elks Club of Greensburg, the ravages of time.

I can hear the question now -- "Grandpa, what was a Lodge Hall?"

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GREENSBURG STANDARD, Feb. 24, 1870

Several persons have expressed their approval of the suggestion we made to our city council last week, touching the release from municipal taxation of manufacturing houses working as many as 50 hands. It has been suggested that such an ordinance be passed, and in addition the council should appoint a committee to prepare a circular setting forth the advantages our city and county offers to a capitialist desiring to invest their means in any manufacturing branch of trade, and to seek out men who are willing to avail themselves of these advantages. We understand there is a gentleman at Hamilton, Ohio who might be prevailed upon to invest his money here if liberal inducements are present.

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GREENSBURG AS VIEWED BY A STRANGER

The following article was found in the educational column of the Shelbyville Banner. Let our citizens read it and see what we are thought of abroad:

The city of Greensburg while it has not a decent school house in the whole corporation boasts of a fine courthouse erected at the cost of \$125,000 and its jail now being built at an expense of \$20,000. The courts of justice there are accomodated with finely ornamental rooms with velvet cushioned seats in which to dispence justice to criminals, while school teachers are compelled to gather the children together in dark basement rooms or old dilapidated dwellings or shops and there, without even comfortable seating or desks, teach them things which are to prepare them for usefulness and happiness in life. What kind of a policy is this? Are our courts of justice and criminals in our jails to be better cared for than our children? Why should \$75,000 be spent in ornamenting a courthouse while the children are left destitute of even a comfortable school house? Let some of the benevolet, the wise, and good of Greensburg answer.

Decatur Republican, August 1860

HISTORICAL PREFACE

from

"NEWSPAPERS YESTERDAY AND TODAY"

Richard Morrish, August 24, 1955

The first newspapers of Tri-Family enjoyment were carried by stage coach from Cincinnati to "Paddy's Run" Ohio - now called Shandon. Another coach line then brought the mail to Brookville, Indiana. The only newspapers came out of Cincinnati and were the "Cincinnati Gazette", later called the "Commercial Gazette". It cost \$12.00 a year including the difficult delivery charge. Indianapolis had not yet become a newspaper center.

From Brookville, this complicated delivery was picked up by people making trips to that busy land office center. Because of this indefinite time table, newspapers were from weeks to months old when received. But they covered the politics of the nation. The grain and livestock markets had to be purely guess work. Since much of it was trading in the community itself and the "pitting" of one sharp wit against the other, a shrewd and adequate system established itself.

Because of fording of streams and canoe upsets, much mail was lost. The first post office serving the Tri-Family was just west of the Spring Hill Church and is one of the small land mark buildings still standing.

The first railroad mail service was from Cincinnati and opened in 1853, only as far as Greensburg. After that the county became dotted with little post offices, usually in country stores or homes. The Tri-Family then in a fair degree of prosperity started hack lines, carrying passengers, store supplies and the mail.

These hack lines expanded, with rival lines brought in, to keep down the monopoly and the price of delivery. A Mr. Ritmer is remembered as driving a rival line, known as the Star Route. The mail service remembered by most people here today, was the Rominger Hack Line from Greensburg to Clarksburg. In icy weather, the Rominger hack usually had a "free fare" on behind in the person of young Homer Meek, on skates. This line served the community until the government installation of Rural Free Delivery.

In 1830 Eligah Mitchell, uncle of Orville Thompson began a paper at the county seat, called the "Greensburg Chronicle". He changed the name to the "Political Clarion". From then on, although many prominent pioneers worked at it, early papers died of malnutrition. They only flared up at national election times. Some of the newspapers were only eight column folios weeklys and bi-weeklys in home printing. Even Mr. Quincey Donnell could not make one go. Democratic and Republican ventures both alternately failed.

John and Orville Thompson were again "in the saddle" when the Greensburg Standard became the first stabalized newspaper. It was an evolution of all previous efforts, so no date is recorded as to its beginning.

For many years, it carried only news of county interest and vital statistics, but reflected the history of the county seat and surrounding communities. The old files we enjoy in the modern Daily News are accurate and interesting annals. Correspondence sent in the news from small towns. "Fugit Rhymes" written by "Marth" Hamilton wife of "Squire" are priceless from the Kingston community.

Early newspapers both city and rural were ugly things both in makeup and spirit. They were more invective in their views than "Westbrook Pegler" or Time Magazine. Their advertisements mostly of patent medicines were hideous, but all fully clad.

One local slowing down of early delivery progress was due to the Kingston store keeper and post master, Mr. Sam Stewart. He cornered the papers on delivery, which small boys are waiting for after school. As only a few were subscribed for, Luther Donnell, Chester Hamilton, J.B. Robison and others had to finally stop that practice. The elderly Mr. Stewart was a slow and thorough reader, right down through the Lydia Pinkham "ads", and boys were needed for evening chores.

When the Civil War broke out an evening paper delivery was too slow for anxious news of the war. Those who could afford it, collectively hired John Jackson, 10 or 12 years old, to go on horseback to McCoy Station and get the newspapers thrown off the morning train.

This same struggle of newspaper founding was repeated in every county seat and city of the country until step by step, it reached the unbelievable system of the present day.

* * * * *

ORPHAN TRAINS continued.

The founder of the New York Childrens Aid Society (NYCAS) was a social worker by the name of Charles Loring Brace. He served as head and secretary of the society from 1853 until his death in 1890.

Brace felt that institutionalizing children only stunted and destroyed them. Through his plan these children would have a chance to grow up in a healthy environment.

In 1853 the United States was undergoing a great migration. It has been said that there were between 10,000 to 30,000 homeless children adrift on the streets of New York. Many of these homeless children were abandoned by their immigrant parents because of the cultural shock. They also had neither work or a home and thus it was better to give them a chance for a better life. Some parents brought the children to the NYCAS and "relinquished" them because they could not provide for them.

Most of the children on the orphan trains were not adopted by their new families. They knew their real names and the names of their parents and brothers and sisters. Some children took the name of their new family but many did not.

Boys 15 years old or older were expected to work for their new family until they reached the age of 18 for room and board. Then they were on their own.

Children under the age of 12 were expected to remain until they reached the age of 18. The new families were expected to treat the children well and see that they get their schooling, clothing and training. They were expected to report their progress once a year.

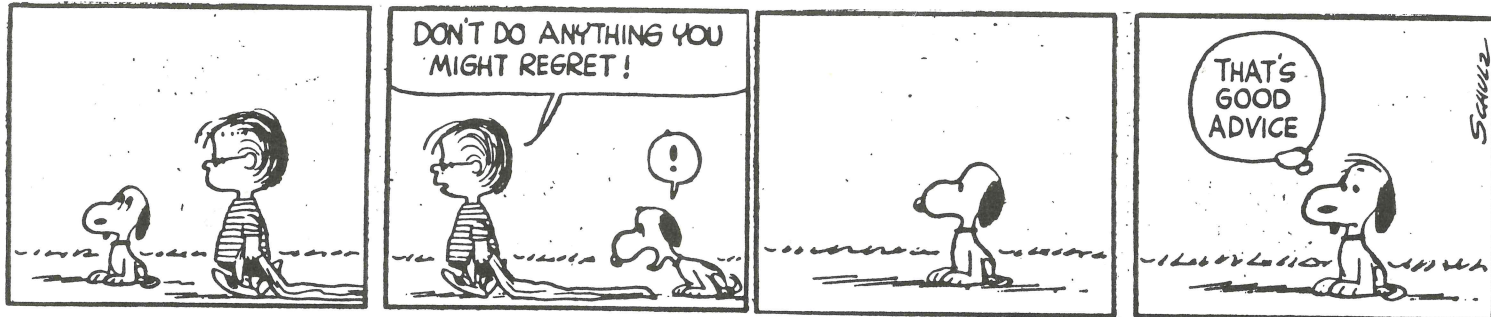
If the arrangement was unsatisfactory or the child was unhappy or mistreated in anyway, the society would terminate the relationship and a new home would be found.

In 1853 the first children were placed in New York, Connecticut and Pennsylvania. In 1854 the first "trains" were instigated and the first children were taken to Dowagiac, Michigan. There were 47 children. One record said it was all boys that were on the first train.

In 1859 twenty seven (27) "Orphans" came to Hamilton County, Indiana and surrounding area.

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SNOOPY THINKS TWICE



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/THE BULLETIN/

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF DECATUR COUNTY

Vol. 4 , No. 109 Greensburg, Indiana January 1987

OCCASION: Winter Meeting of the
Decatur County Historical Society

PLACE: Baptist Church
W. Washington St.
Greensburg, IN.

DATE: January 25, 1987
Sunday afternoon at
2:00 P.M.

PROGRAM: A play entitled, "A Visit to the Hoosier Schoolmaster" will be produced by members of the Society. The play is an adaption from THE HOOSIER SCHOOLMASTER written by Anna Jo Foley especially for this occasion. It will be an opportunity to see some of the top performers of this area in action. The setting for the book is Decatur County, called Hoopole, in a mythical community of Flat Creek near the town of Clifty, Milford to us. This will not be a Dinner Theatre, but will be a chance for some laughs, and to learn something about this historical Hoosier book and the author, Edward Eggleston. Refreshments will be served, I am almost sure.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Joe L. Owen, St. Paul, IN.
Charles R. Parker, N. Charleston,
South Carolina

MEMORIALS

In memory of Stanton Guthrie by
Robert D. Hall

GIFTS

Mildred West Braden

RED STAR TIME - If there's a Red Star on your address label, it's time to PAY your DUES for 1987

MUSEUM DONORS

Philip Diewert
Martha Linegar
Bernard Neinaber
Margaret Donnell Becker, Mrs.
Becker has given to the Museum all of the fine artifacts she

had on loan at the Museum. This is a quite generous gift, and the Society is very appreciative of her generosity.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE - As 1986 comes to a close, and we are starting into 1987 I have some thoughts for our society.

1. We have one of the better county Museums in the state.
2. We have a good membership as far as numbers & donations of items to the museum is concerned.
3. We do need more volunteer workers to help with the general operation of the museum, that is, helping the curator, helping during the time we are open to the public, general maintenance of the building and grounds.
4. If it wasn't for a few dedicated persons, the museum just would not be. Some of these people are getting tired, if you would like to help, please call Lee Lauderdale (663-2769) or Jackie Mendenhall (663-8277).
5. At the last annual meeting, it was voted to raise the dues for 1987 to \$5 per member. This was done for 2 reasons, the cost of maintenance & utilities keep raising, also, the house will soon need a new roof. A new roof was put on the garage this fall.

* * * * *

FALL TOUR - by: Viola Minning

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The first stop was the Dearborn County Court House which was built in 1872 and is a fine example of a Classical Revival building with a fluted Corinthian columned portico. Telford Walker, president of the

Dearborn County Historical Society, conducted the tour of the Dearborn County Museum which is located on the first floor of the court house, and pointed out their current special display of German costumes, musical instruments, dolls and many other items. Walker took the group to the second floor court room which features many beautiful stained glass windows donated in 1939 by members of the Bar to commemorate their fellow attorneys. The third floor court room was also visited affording a closeup window view of the ornate columns.

Lynn Slayback served as guide for the bus tour of the city, and pointed out many historic sites.

Founded in 1802 by Samuel C. Vance, Lawrenceburg quickly became a trading center for all of southeastern Indiana, utilizing both its proximity to the Ohio River and the early growth of the railroad to provide the necessary transportation. The entire downtown business district has been proposed for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. Vance's magnificent Federal style mansion, built around 1818, was pointed out by Slayback who said it was now owned by Lotus Warehouses and was not open to the public. The interior is graced by a circular stairway which connects all three floors of the home. In pre-levee days the palladian windows faced the river.

On the levee is a historic marker in remembrance of the day in 1861 when Abraham Lincoln, en route to his inauguration, made a brief speech from the back of his train.

Across the street from the court house is the former Lawrenceburg Woolen Mills built in 1866. During the huge flood of 1937, townspeople took shelter in the upper floors of this building and the court house. A plaque noting the high water mark is at the top of the second story of the court house.

The Jesse Hunt House, a hotel and restaurant which has been located in the same building since 1818, was said to be the first three-story building in Indiana.

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A building which formerly housed a cigar factory in the mid-1800's was pointed out. Lawrenceburg was the tobacco and cigar making capital of the midwest for a number of years producing more than 5 million hand-rolled cigars in 1873.

The scene of a murder in 1820 was shown. Slayback told that a folk ballad is still sung about the tragic affair in which a young man was shot in a quarrel over the affections of a young lady.

Outstanding examples of early row houses, built from 1818 to 1830, exhibited interesting architectural details such as iron balconies and bay windows. Most of these were added in later years when traveling salesmen went door to door selling the "modern" amenities.

A beautiful Greek Revival home built by Judge Isaac Dunn about 1840 was contrasted to a much simpler one he built in 1818. A large white brick residence built in 1857 for Joanna Hunt was the scene of a gala party in 1865 honoring Civil War General William T. Sherman.

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IN REMEMBRANCE OF AN OLD FRIEND

by:

William Parker

Among the articles I have written over the years for the Bulletin you have heard me mention "Old Billie" and possibly wonder why. To begin, Billie was a member of our home before I was and lived with us for over twenty five years. He was also an important member and demanded only some corn, oats, and hay in exchange for many miles of transportation.

In the early days of our country up to the perfection of the automobile and the railroad, ox or horse power was the only means of moving goods and people. Naturally, most lots in Greensburg had a barn down on the alley containing at least two horse stalls, a hay mow and a shed on one end to store a buggy or a spring wagon, which

might be an early version of the pick-up truck, and in some of the more prosperous homes a fringed-top surrey or carriage.

The supply of buggies then was as great as the supply of automobiles is now. The Greensburg Carriage Factory made many vehicles until it burned down, one of the largest fires I remember. It was never rebuilt. George Montgomery and son, Roy, had a shop east of the Odd Fellows Home where they made and repaired buggies, spring wagons, hearses for most of the funeral directors in this part of the state until they burned out. Then they moved to west Main Street in town. The turnover in buggies was fairly great - runaways, collisions with gate posts, upsets, lack of lubricants on the axles, how they could squall. We found the unused, leftover bottle of castor oil good for buggy axles, as well as other things. Any local blacksmith could rebuild a wheel, replace tires, springs, and curtains. As our family increased, there was Father, Mother myself, and a younger brother, we began to get cramped for room, so we ordered a larger buggy from Sears, Roebuck and Co. It would seat three comfortably, a side spring job and rode very easy. How we watched and waited for the notice from the freight house that it had arrived in Greensburg. After we got it home and assembled and Billie hitched up, we immediately noticed he looked smaller and the buggy larger, but he did not object, and we were so much more comfortable. We took off for Milroy, Dad, Mom, and I on the the seat, and Robert on a little wooden box on the floor at the usual speed of six miles per hour. We immediately named it the Palace Car.

Many of the older folks favored a buggy called a Phaeton, much lower so it was easier to get in and out of. Mr. White had a buggy, the only one I ever saw with a fifth wheel on both front and rear axles, connected with cross rods so it could be turned around in little more than its own length, no cramping or upsetting. The young men of those days were just as proud of their gleaming harness and shiny buggies and the young men of today are of their sports cars.

We had draft horses on the farms and in the cities to do the heavy work and moving. The driving or buggy horse, a trotter or pacer, usually a descendant of some famous blood line. And let's not forget the Shetland Pony, the favorite of the children.

With so many horses, we had many people dealing in horses, called horse traders. They could be found around the livery stables. Their descendants can be found down at the corner used car lot.

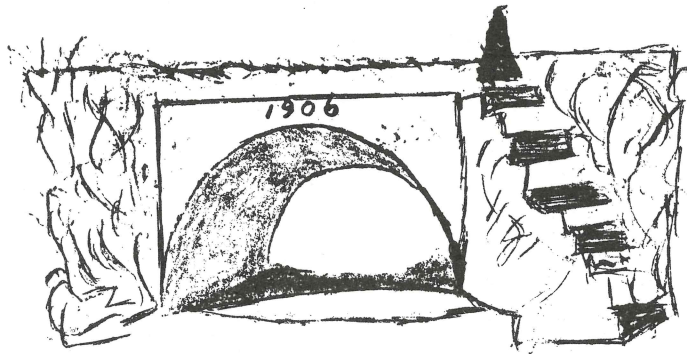
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on many trips to visit relatives in Rush and Shelby Counties and down to our farm in Clay Township. He never refused.

As he grew older, Dad gradually retired him down on the farm, and when I returned from World War I, he was gone. I never asked about him.

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THE RAILROAD UNDERPASSES



There are two Railroad Underpasses in Decatur County - one at New Point, the other near Lake McCoy. Another is about one mile east of the Decatur County line in Franklin County, another at Batesville, one at Morris east of Batesville, and yet another nears Spades. These bridges were constructed of concrete and bear the date 1906. They surely were built very sturdy to have withstood 80 years of wear. During the Hey-day of the railroads they withstood hundreds of tons of traffic each day as the rumbling trains passed over them.

First a little background on this railroad, known as the Cincinnati and Indianapolis Ry. Trains began to run from Lawrenceburg to Greensburg in 1853. Records show that the first 12 miles of track had been laid by October 14, 1852. The first train to pull into Indianapolis over this line did so on November 1, 1853. There was only a single track at that time.

A much better means of transportation was available with the coming of the railroads. They furnished employment for many local people. There were however some problems created - people were not accustomed to look out for trains, and accidents did happen. Even farm animals that were near the tracks were injured.

This reminds me of an old story about a farmer near New Point whose 2-year old steer was hit and killed by a train on June 20th, 1855. He filed a claim for his loss with Joel Colson, who was the first Railroad agent at New Point. The claim was settled for \$15.00. Maybe the Cowcatcher on the engine was not working properly. Note: Definition - Cowcatcher: 'A strong frame in front of the locomotive, for removing obstructions, such as strayed cattle and the like from the rails'.

Later, the railroads had to build fences on each side of the right-of-way to keep off wandering stock.

During the next 50 years, railroads underwent tremendous expansion, increasing the 15,000 miles of track to almost 200,000 miles. Here, it was necessary to build another track alongside the

existing one. In someplaces they ran into trouble getting the right-of-way. I remember my father telling that New Point citizens complained about the railroad taking one of their streets - Railroad Street, which ran parallel to the first track.

Then I cam across another story in a letter written by a man who is now 97 years old. He said that surveyors wanted to reroute the right-of-way, which would take it thru an old cemetery in which was interred the body of the wife of Willis Maple. Willis objected to this, and came out there with his shpt-gun and sat there until the surveyors were persuaded to change the route.

The underpass bridges no doubt helped to prevent many accidents. Most of the bridges were probably built for a different reason - to eliminate the steep grades and to create a more level track.

Many people were killed and injured and at the other crossings and in other railroad accidents. Twenty six people from my home area, New Point and its environs died as the result of railroad accidents. Three men from one family died, each in a separate accident within a period of one year. I presume that like occurances took place in other localities where the railroads passed thru.

Getting back to the underpasses - vehicles with extra height must beware. I remember one Semi that couldn't make it under the New Point underpass. His top got stuck under it and he had to back up with great difficulty.

These bridges were surely built to last and it is sad to see these monuments of the past used as billboards for the graffiti of these uncaring individuals who seemingly have nothing better to with their time and abilities.

By: Raymond Carr

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Up until 1924 it was thought by the people of Greensburg that the tree on the tower was a silver maple. Many of the trees planted along the streets and in the Courthouse park were maples. Then one of the County Commissioners picked up a leaf in the park that had fallen from a basswood or linden tree growing in the park. This was unfamiliar to him so he sought the assistance of the professor mentioned in the attached clipping. They correctly identified the leaf but were mistaken about its source. However linden was more poetic than maple. So the high school year book was called the Linden.

In August of 1932, I was one of the unemployed of the depression, working about 12 hours a day cuting fire wood and trying to run a small fix-it shop and clearing less than I would have made on WPA. I was also scoutmaster of the local troop. One day I saw the steeple-jack mentioned in another clipping working on the tower. I talked him into letting me go up on the tower to look at the tree. While there I cut several small limbs from the tree and hid them in my shirt. It seemed that it was forbidden to do this. When I got home, I checked the leaves I had gotten against the Boy Scout Handbook and decided that they were from either a big toothed aspen or a silver poplar (a close cousin of the aspen). Both trees are native but the poplar is more common. I sent some of the leaves and limbs to Purdue University for identification. It was determined that the tree on the courthouse tower was indeed a big toothed aspen. When I notified the County Commissioners, the City Council, the Chamber of Commerce and the local newspaper of this finding, nobody wanted to believe it. Aspen seemed to be not as poetic as linden,

and "big toothed"!!! But somebody sent off some of the leaves and twigs, which I supplied, to the Smithsonian. I was not thanked for upsetting the local legend, and the newspaper pointedly never mentioned my name.

By: Philip Deiwert

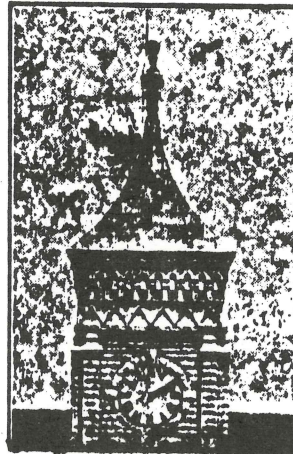
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What Greensburg Has

1. State I. O. O. F. Home.
2. Interurban lines.
3. State highways in five directions.
4. A fine Y. M. C. A. building.
5. A large modern high school building.
6. A magnificent library building.
7. Well equiped Memorial Hospital.
8. Modern railroad station.
9. Four good banks in fine quarters.
10. Many up-to-date stores with magnificent stocks in all lines.
11. Railroads in five directions.
12. Several mills and elevators, some manufacturing concerns.
13. The Standard Casket Hardware Co.
14. Good churches with good plants.
15. A new gymnasium, will seat 3,500.
16. Strong fraternal organizations.
17. The C. J. Loyd & Co. poultry plant, one of the largest poultry shipping plants in the United States.
18. Kova Brush and Broom Mfg. Co.
19. Cyclone Fence Co.
20. Reliance Manufacturing Co.

(Courtesy of Greensburg Chamber of Commerce)

GREENSBURG, INDIANA The Tower Tree City



Extends a welcome to
Sovereign Grand Odd Fellows, General Military Council, Association of Rebekah Assemblies upon visitation to State I. O. O. F. Home, Sunday, Sept. 14, 1936.

MEMBERSHIPS and MEMORIALS

Historical Society of Decatur County, Inc.
P.O. Box 163 Greensburg, IN. 47240

Yearly Membership \$5.00
Life Membership \$100.00

Payable by January 1st.

☒ Renewal ☐ New

☐ Gift ☐ Life

NAME _____ ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

IF GIFTS: From _____ Address _____

MEMORIALS

In Memory of _____ Comments _____

SOCIETY'S OFFICERS

President.....Marlin P. Maddux
521 West St. City
Phone: 663-2942
1st. V. Pres.....Don Minning
2nd. V. Pres.....Readawn Metz
Rec. Sec.....Diana Springmier
Cor. Sec.....Peg Miller
Treas.....Ruth McClintic

DIRECTORS

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Mary Doles
Franklin Corya
Robert Conwell
Allan Beall
Diana Swegman

EDITOR OF BULLETIN

Van P. Batterton
525 N. Broadway
Greensburg, IN. 47240

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Earl Vanderbur
Allan Beall
Marjorie Hunter
Voyle Morgan
John Oliger

MUSEUM CURATOR

Jackie Mendenhall
663-8277

MUSEUM VOLUNTEERS

Lee Lauderdale
663-2769

SOCIETY'S AGENT

William H. Robbins

COUNTY HISTORIAN

Dale Myers
663-4370

HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF
DECATUR COUNTY, INC.
P.O. BOX 163
GREENSBURG, INDIANA 47240

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/THE BULLETIN/

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF DECATUR COUNTY

Vol. 4 , No. 109 Greensburg, Indiana January 1987

OCCASION: Winter Meeting of the
Decatur County Historical Society

PLACE: Baptist Church
W. Washington St.
Greensburg, IN.

DATE: January 25, 1987
Sunday afternoon at
2:00 P.M.

PROGRAM: A play entitled, "A Visit to the Hoosier Schoolmaster" will be produced by members of the Society. The play is an adaption from THE HOOSIER SCHOOLMASTER written by Anna Jo Foley especially for this occasion. It will be an opportunity to see some of the top performers of this area in action. The setting for the book is Decatur County, called Hoopole, in a mythical community of Flat Creek near the town of Clifty, Milford to us. This will not be a Dinner Theatre, but will be a chance for some laughs, and to learn something about this historical Hoosier book and the author, Edward Eggleston. Refreshments will be served, I am almost sure.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Joe L. Owen, St. Paul, IN.
Charles R. Parker, N. Charleston,
South Carolina

MEMORIALS

In memory of Stanton Guthrie by
Robert D. Hall

GIFTS

Mildred West Braden

RED STAR TIME - If there's a Red Star on your address label, it's time to PAY your DUES for 1987

MUSEUM DONORS

Philip Diewert
Martha Linegar
Bernard Neinaber
Margaret Donnell Becker, Mrs.
Becker has given to the Museum all of the fine artifacts she

had on loan at the Museum. This is a quite generous gift, and the Society is very appreciative of her generosity.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE - As 1986 comes to a close, and we are starting into 1987 I have some thoughts for our society.

1. We have one of the better county Museums in the state.
2. We have a good membership as far as numbers & donations of items to the museum is concerned.
3. We do need more volunteer workers to help with the general operation of the museum, that is, helping the curator, helping during the time we are open to the public, general maintenance of the building and grounds.
4. If it wasn't for a few dedicated persons, the museum just would not be. Some of these people are getting tired, if you would like to help, please call Lee Lauderdale (663-2769) or Jackie Mendenhall (663-8277).
5. At the last annual meeting, it was voted to raise the dues for 1987 to \$5 per member. This was done for 2 reasons, the cost of maintenance & utilities keep raising, also, the house will soon need a new roof. A new roof was put on the garage this fall.

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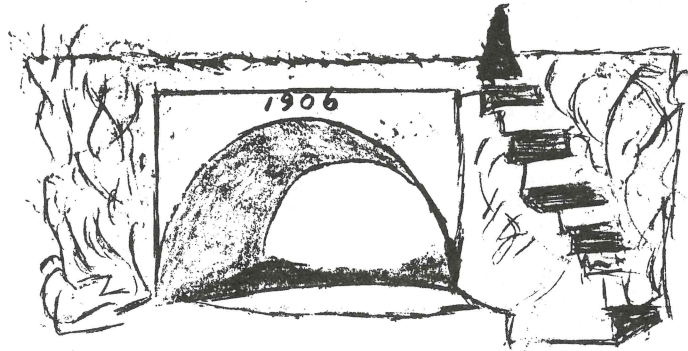
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This reminds me of an old story about a farmer near New Point whose 2-year old steer was hit and killed by a train on June 20th, 1855. He filed a claim for his loss with Joel Colson, who was the first Railroad agent at New Point. The claim was settled for \$15.00. Maybe the Cowcatcher on the engine was not working properly. Note: Definition - Cowcatcher: 'A strong frame in front of the locomotive, for removing obstructions, such as strayed cattle and the like from the rails'.

Later, the railroads had to build fences on each side of the right-of-way to keep off wandering stock.

During the next 50 years, railroads underwent tremendous expansion, increasing the 15,000 miles of track to almost 200,000 miles. Here, it was necessary to build another track alongside the

existing one. In someplaces they ran into trouble getting the right-of-way. I remember my father telling that New Point citizens complained about the railroad taking one of their streets - Railroad Street, which ran parallel to the first track.

Then I cam across another story in a letter written by a man who is now 97 years old. He said that surveyors wanted to reroute the right-of-way, which would take it thru an old cemetery in which was interred the body of the wife of Willis Maple. Willis objected to this, and came out there with his shpt-gun and sat there until the surveyors were persuaded to change the route.

The underpass bridges no doubt helped to prevent many accidents. Most of the bridges were probably built for a different reason - to eliminate the steep grades and to create a more level track.

Many people were killed and injured and at the other crossings and in other railroad accidents. Twenty six people from my home area, New Point and its environs died as the result of railroad accidents. Three men from one family died, each in a separate accident within a period of one year. I presume that like occurances took place in other localities where the railroads passed thru.

Getting back to the underpasses - vehicles with extra height must beware. I remember one Semi that couldn't make it under the New Point underpass. His top got stuck under it and he had to back up with great difficulty.

These bridges were surely built to last and it is sad to see these monuments of the past used as billboards for the graffiti of these uncaring individuals who seemingly have nothing better to with their time and abilities.

By: Raymond Carr

+++++

Up until 1924 it was thought by the people of Greensburg that the tree on the tower was a silver maple. Many of the trees planted along the streets and in the Courthouse park were maples. Then one of the County Commissioners picked up a leaf in the park that had fallen from a basswood or linden tree growing in the park. This was unfamiliar to him so he sought the assistance of the professor mentioned in the attached clipping. They correctly identified the leaf but were mistaken about its source. However linden was more poetic than maple. So the high school year book was called the Linden.

In August of 1932, I was one of the unemployed of the depression, working about 12 hours a day cuting fire wood and trying to run a small fix-it shop and clearing less than I would have made on WPA. I was also scoutmaster of the local troop. One day I saw the steeple-jack mentioned in another clipping working on the tower. I talked him into letting me go up on the tower to look at the tree. While there I cut several small limbs from the tree and hid them in my shirt. It seemed that it was forbidden to do this. When I got home, I checked the leaves I had gotten against the Boy Scout Handbook and decided that they were from either a big toothed aspen or a silver poplar (a close cousin of the aspen). Both trees are native but the poplar is more common. I sent some of the leaves and limbs to Purdue University for identification. It was determined that the tree on the courthouse tower was indeed a big toothed aspen. When I notified the County Commissioners, the City Council, the Chamber of Commerce and the local newspaper of this finding, nobody wanted to believe it. Aspen seemed to be not as poetic as linden,

and "big toothed"!!! But somebody sent off some of the leaves and twigs, which I supplied, to the Smithsonian. I was not thanked for upsetting the local legend, and the newspaper pointedly never mentioned my name.
By: Philip Deiwert

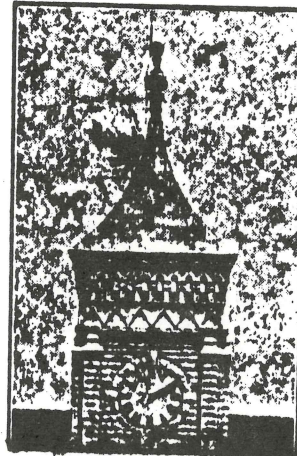
+++++

What Greensburg Has

1. State I. O. O. F. Home.
2. Interurban lines.
3. State highways in five directions.
4. A fine Y. M. C. A. building.
5. A large modern high school building.
6. A magnificent library building.
7. Well equiped Memorial Hospital.
8. Modern railroad station.
9. Four good banks in fine quarters.
10. Many up-to-date stores with magnificent stocks in all lines.
11. Railroads in five directions.
12. Several mills and elevators, some manufacturing concerns.
13. The Standard Casket Hardware Co.
14. Good churches with good plants.
15. A new gymnasium, will seat 3,500.
16. Strong fraternal organizations.
17. The C. J. Loyd & Co. poultry plant, one of the largest poultry shipping plants in the United States.
18. Kova Brush and Broom Mfg. Co.
19. Cyclone Fence Co.
20. Reliance Manufacturing Co.

(Courtesy of Greensburg Chamber of Commerce)

GREENSBURG, INDIANA The Tower Tree City



Extends a welcome to
Sovereign Grand Odd Fellows, General Military Council, Association of Rebekah Assemblies upon visitation to State I. O. O. F. Home, Sunday, Sept. 14, 1930.

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P.O. Box 163 Greensburg, IN. 47240

Yearly Membership \$5.00
Life Membership \$100.00

Payable by January 1st.

☐ Renewal ☐ New

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In Memory of _____ Comments _____

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/THE BULLETIN/

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF DECATUR COUNTY

Vol. 4 , No. 110

Greensburg, Indiana

APRIL 1987

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Dinner Meeting.

DATE: Saturday, April 11th.
1987 at 6:30 P.M.

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Jane F. Murphy- Columbus, IN.
Loren Marlowe
John Stewart
Mrs. John (Alberta) Stewart
Elbert Spillman
Howard Parker
Mrs. Stanley(Elizabeth)Reed
Mrs. Darol (Toni) Collins
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WINTER MEETING was held at the
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Jan. 25th with over 125 faith-
ful members and guests in atten-
dance. The program consisted of
a play put on by members of the
Society. The play was an adap-
tion from the Hoosier School-
master, written and directed by
Anna Jo Foley. She did a fine
job. The performers got by
without any vegetables being
thrown. In all, the program
was quite well received by an
enthusiast audience. As of this
date, there has been no clamor
for a repeat performance. A
fine spread of refreshments were
provided by a committee of Diana
Springmeyer, Rheadawn Metz, Mary
Doles, Ruby Ernstes, Steve
Stradley, & Lorena Maddux.
Performers were:

Jim Smith	Duane Maddux
Van Batterton	Bill Hunter
Marge Hunter	Juanita Beall
Rheadawn Metz	Henry Ernstes
Allan Beall	John Parker
Oliver Hunter	Mary Lou Bausback
Nancy Gilliland	Ralph Swegman
Ryan Maddux	Marlin Maddux
Peg Miller	Morgan Miers
Orville Pitts	Diana Swegman
Bill Robbins	Earl Vanderbur
Gloria Austin,	narrator.

MEMORIAL

In memory of Elizabeth Woodfill,
a charter member, from Mrs. W.
Hunter Robbins.

=====

An Arkansas farmer and bird hunter
went into East Texas for some bird
shooting.
He arranged with a Texas farmer
who was also an avid bird hunter
with lots of ground cover and
birds to spend a pleasant day
hunting.

While they were talking over a
bourbon and branch, the Arky told
his companion that his dog laying
**CONTINUED on page 7, see FARMER

THE EXPLOSION

By:

WILLIAM PARKER

The Natural Gas field of Indiana composes about twenty five hundred square miles, a part of eastern Indiana about one hundred miles long by seventy miles wide with an irregular outline. It is divided in a north section and a south section. The south section is composed of Marion, Hancock, Henry, Wayne, Rush, Shelby and Decatur Counties, with Decatur County being the southern tip.

This field is underlaid with a dolomite limestone rock called Trenton rock. This is found eight to nine hundred feet below the surface and is the rock holding the gas. Some parts of the field contain trenton which is very porous and in our county it is very hard. When the drill penetrates it, the gas escapes slow so the strongest flow is in the north section, which was depleted first.

Experimental drilling was commenced in latter 1870 for coal, but gas was discovered and the gas boom soon started. Companies were organized, speculators took over the drilling was fast and furious.

In Greensburg, three gas companies were in operation. First, the Greensburg Natural Gas Company with twenty five wells. Second, Greensburg Gas and Electric Company with thirty wells. And then the Muddy Fork Gas Company with thrity five wells. Average depth was eight hundred and fifty to nine hundred feet. At this time there were also companies operating in Clarksburg, New Point, Adams, St. Paul, Sandusky and Westport and a hundred or more private wells sunk and owned by farmers for their individual use. In addition I find ten more in the county, one Newton Natural Gas Company, Dallie Tillson owner, Florine's Father.

I grew up in Greensburg around the turn of the century, as a bountiful supply of natural gas was available to all the citizens of the city for lighting, cooking and some heating in cold weather. We used wood and later a big base burner that burned anthracite coal. This gas was run through a gas meter and sold for fifteen cents per thousand cubic feet, which was very reasonable. Stanley Knarr was the meter reader. Many older citizens will remember him walking up and down the streets with his cane and leather putties to protect him from the unfriendly dogs. Of all the unhandy places to place a gas meter, ours was in the corner of the press in our living room. Stanley had our permission to come in and read the meter without knocking. Dad had a big strong woman caring for my mother at the time and she came in the room and saw the rear end of a man protruding from the press and was about to tackle him when he emerged with his flashlight and explained who he was. I wonder if it is still there. Much of this Greensburg gas was from right at home, for several wells were drilled within the city limits. I think I could find some of them, but I doubt that they are still producing.

The farmers of our county also shared the privilege of using cheap fuel. In many localities, every well to do farmer had his own individual gas well. Since Clara and I went to housekeeping in

1921, in the southeast corner of Clay Township, we have had gas wells all around us, about one every half mile or closer. We held out until 1935, when Dad decided it was time to drill, so we secured the services of Mr. Tom Castor, of Sardinia. He was an experienced driller who still had his own well rig powered by an upright steam engine. With Tom as driller and his son as fireman, we have a gaswell eight hundred and sixty five feet deep showing two hundred and fifty to three hundred pounds of rock pressure. Drilled about eight or nine feet into trenton, the gas holding rock. The driller is very careful to avoid drilling through the trenton, which could let salt water fill the well. This is a matter of a little experience or just pure luck, as the thickness of the layer varies at different places. We piped the gas in our home and east to my brother Robert's home some one half mile. We laid the axes and cross cut saws away and have not cut a stick of wood since. We have used this for nearly fifty two years without any problems, no leaks or rusted pipes. We are very thankful.

It is surprising so few accidents have happened, and these that did occur have been mostly caused my poor house plumbing. The supervisor of Natural Gas says, "The condition of some of the pipe lines extending over parts of the field is bad, especially in what is known as farmers plants. Leaks can be found at nearly every joint. These have been laid down hastily and by inexperienced men".

The worst accident I can think of in Greensburg was the explosion at Minears Store. Gas was detected in the basement and Jim Dashiell was called to investigate. He went to the basement with a lighted candle and soon found it. The back end of the store landed in the alley, two clerks were seriously injured and Jimmy fortunately was not badly hurt, only lost his hair. This was many years ago.

In many parts of the field we find gas escaping through the earth and bubbling up through the water in streams. I don't know for I have not been there for over fifty years, but at one time, just below where Rodney Creek joined Sandcreek in Marion Township, gas was bubbling up. Enough of the boys kept it lit most of the time. The great upheaval of earth and rocks and the explosion which followed, south of Waldron near the Van Pelt Cemetery, August 11, 1890, was attributed to the gas escaping through the shales and leaks below the packers from the wells at Waldron and St. Paul. The gas escaping literally through the shales, collected until the pressure became so great to cause the upheaval. This was an event of great interest and was visited by many people. I recall hearing my parents tell of driving over from Milroy, before they were married, to view this explosion site. Also, the pond in Flatrock at Downeyville was said to have been formed by a gas blowout. The waste from these causes has resulted to vast injury, by reducing the pressure and allowing the introduction of salt water into the wells, which ruins the well.

It might be well to mention some of the more prominent men who drilled these wells. I will have to do this from memory as I remember them, for I have no list. I will probably leave out some who should be included. Most of the county wells were dug by local people. The earliest was no doubt, Noah Dashiell and his son Jim, and they were active for many years. In Greensburg there was Burney Rimstead, who was also a well shooter, and his partner Ira Bird. Benny was a nephew of Noah. Arthur Rimstead was a good friend of mine and a

classmate at the old west building. Claude Conquest was also very active in the business. In Adams there was Captain Walker, Web Wright and Raymond Longstreet. In Sardinia there was Tom Castor, who dug our well. Probably his last. When the big rush for gas was on, the drillers worked around the clock, taking Sunday off. Originally, they had four legged wooden derricks put together with wrought nails and moving them from well to well. Later, they used a single long wood mast with guy wires for bracing. Power was usually steam. An eight or ten inch pipe to stone, then dropping off to six inches to shut water out. Tubing was usually two inch iron or wrought iron pipe and went down to trenton with a packer or sealer on the end, and if everything worked you had a dry well with plenty of gas and no water. I forgot to mention Willie McCarty, who dug mostly water wells but did drill two gas wells in our community in the 1950's with good results.

I mentioned previously that the trenton rock in the north half of the gas belt was very porous, the gas flowing easily out of the rocks pores, while in the southern section was very hard with no pores. This was especially noticeable in Decatur County. Someone came up with the idea that if you would blow this stone with a high explosion, cracks and fissures would result and the gas would escape into the well. Nitroglycerin was tried and worked well, this is a highly explosive, oily liquid, prepared by the action of nitric and sulfuric acids upon glycerine. Before this explosive was available commercially, a few gas well drillers made their own. Among them was Noah Dashiel, living three miles north of Greensburg on State Road 3. He had his operation on the east side of his farm on Muddy Fork. He stored this is hay mows and various out buildings on the farm. His formula: Cook ammonia and natural fat, probably lard or tallow mixed with sulfuric and nitric acids and glycerine. This mixture created considerable heat, so he had to have water available for cooling. It sounds hazardous to me. The only other man who manufactured this explosive in our county was Phillip (Smooth Bore) Mowerer, who had his operation below Turner's Corner, along Sand Creek. I wonder if he could be the Phillip Mowerer I went to school with in the old east end school in Greensburg.

Before autos and trucks, the explosives were transported by horse power. A spring wagon was fitted up with racks or cradles where the cannisters of explosives were strapped in. I have seen them traveling over the county and do not remember any danger signs on them. Later on the trucks, "EXPLOSIVES" and "DANGEROUS" in large letters was visible.

On arriving at the well, the shooter would sit a tripod over the well and lower the cans with a winch, very carefully. Then the go devil was prepared, a piece of round iron rod resembling a window weight with a hole bored in it to accept a stick of dynamite, capped with enough fuse to allow the go devil to reach the bottom before exploding. The fuse was lit and the go devil dropped, usually a small child of the family was granted the honor. Mom was selected, but was afraid she could not get away fast enough, so John Elie dropped it. In a few seconds, mud, water, rock shot in the air fifty or sixty feet. Tom Castor lit a broom and lit the gas which blazed up ten or fifteen feet. A Mr. Baker, who shot wells over

Ohio, Kentucky and Indiana for the American Glycerine Company, shot our well with sixty quarts, an average shot. Even the empty nitro cans were very dangerous and were destroyed by shooting with a rifle, sometimes blowing a hole in the ground four feet deep.

The nitro glycerine magazine was a little building owned by the explosive company on a little plot leased from Noah Dashiell. It was due west one fourth mile of State Road 3, in line with Noah's drive. Ira Bird was a licensed well shooter and had charge of the magazine. When his stock would get down to two hundred quarts, he would order five hundred more. The nitro came in ten quart, tall, square cans. Bird had a Model T pickup truck with a special padded box for transporting the explosive. Herbert Storms, an employee at the American Glycerine Company of Bradner, Ohio, was delivering Mr. Bird's order and had arrived at the magazine shortly after five o'clock P.M. on December 27, 1918, so it was probably dusk or dark. For some unknown reason the entire seven hundred quarts of nitro and some dynamite exploded in a terrific blast heard and felt all over central Indiana. Most people thought it was an earthquake. Only small bits of Mr. Storms and the truck were found. The remains of Mr. Storms were placed in a small shoe box and Mr. Bird delivered them to the widow and child at Bradner, Ohio. The blast rocked the entire countryside, shattering windows in homes within two miles. One plate glass window in a store in Milroy was broken. All the windows in the Dashiell home were broken. The tenant house on the west side of the road, and nearest to the blast, was occupied by Henry Hicks and family was badly damaged. The summer kitchen was blown away. Later Mrs. Hicks stated, "Mr. Hicks usually helped the driver unload the nitro and had just started down to the magazine. He stopped and returned to the house, just as he reached the steps and porch roof fell down and he had to use the other door. The kitchen cabinet was on the floor with everything spilled". As with tragedies of this kind, hundreds of people visited the scene and was a topic of conversation for months, and you still hear it mentioned occasionally. Besides the loss of life, the truck, the window panes, there was the loss of money from the explosive, which was now two dollars and fifty cents per quart, which is about seventeen hundred and fifty dollars.

Perhaps I should mention something about the size of the crater blown in the ground. Estimates ranged from fifteen feet up to forty feet, and a diameter of forty feet. I feel a depth of forty to fifty feet might be nearer right.

My son John, while measuring crops for the A.S.C., visited this site several times in the last few years and says that in spite of happening sixty eight years ago and being used as a family dump, it is still a very sizeable crater. Loren Sefton now owns the farm. After the explosion, the magazine was moved to the Bob Ramer farm, later owned by Thelma Bird. After a law suit, it was placed on the Thornburg farm, south on the Millhousen Road until it was abandoned locally. What few wells being drilled were shot by a shooter from the American Cyanide Company, bringing his nitro with him. Dynamite is still available locally, usually at the stone quarries and I understand proof of need has to be given. There was a little stone building east of the fire station where Ira Bird stored dynamite, it may still be there.

There are still many private farmer's wells in the county, furnishing some gas, mostly used for cooking, water heating and some heating. Greensburg is well supplied by gas piped in from Texas by the big and little inch lines which cross the south part of our county and brought in by the Indiana Gas Company.

In 1974, the Shawnee Oil and Gas Corporation of Texas came in and leased several hundred acres in Clay Township for gas exploration and drilled at least twelve wells, some with a fairly good flow. These did not meet their expectations for commercial use and were turned over to the farmer.

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THE BOY NEXT DOOR (Dr. Jewett)

By: C.A. Patton

When we moved out to the new house on East Main Street that Pulse and Son built for Grandpa and Grandma I was still in short pants. From April to November one wore only shirt, belt and pants; underwear, stockings, shoes, etc. belonged to Winter. A yard or so from my upstairs room was a maple tree to which soon became attached a rope, by which you could swing to the picket fence next door. This was a quicker exit than by the stairs and less observed by the family. If the rope was in the window it ment: at home, if on the fence, it ment away some where. The fence, a picket one, separated us from Jewetts. Against this fence was a demounted affair which we would today call a trailer. It had been used in selling pattert medicine and at times to take and sell tintypes, at county fairs. It was then used as a warehouse to store telephones invented before Bell brought out his electric one. These of Jewett's were not electric apparatus but depended on vibration illustrated by listening to a distant train by putting your ear to the rail, or scratching one end of a bamboo pole and listening to the sound plainly audible that could not be heard through the air. The senior Jewett, this showed, was a dabler in chemicals which he used in photography and in compounding his patented cure-all which he manufactured on the spot, as well as an inventor. He had whiskers and was seldom seen. His wife wore blue jeans and a mans shirt that hung out. A common sight a few years back but at that time was unknown. The two older children had left the nest and there was Earl the lad a couple of years older than me.

A couple of years is a lot of difference at that age, later on would amount to nothing. There are boys that are outstanding to other boys. I remember one lad that could move his scalp like a horse that wants to shake off a horse fly that it can't switch with its tail. A phenomenon and his control was startling. Must have made a weird effect upon a teacher looking at one of his pupils to see the boys forehead practically disappear, the hair above come down to the eyebrows and transform him momentarily into a Neanderthal pigmy. Another lad could wiggle his ears. Have since learned that all normal people have muscular equipment extending above and behind the ear which at one time was used principally to cock the ear like a dog. But this boy was different. Earl Jewett could whistle like nobody you ever heard. His range was astounding. He was tone perfect, he could charm a bird, he could imitate the chime whistle that blew every

day at Emmerts mill telling the weather we were to have. He was a quiet lad, had no enemies, but had no group of friends, came home late at night, and there are nights that you can hear footsteps far down the street. Italian opera, alpine horns, Swiss yodlers stopped suddenly by a blue jay cursing a robbin and ending with some devine notes of the cantor in the temple.

Grover Cleveland was no longer president, I had left the old town and had lived many years in each of two cities, my people have died and I have grown older and older, but at no time did I ever hear a word of Earl, and never wondered what became of him. Today I received a paper from the old town telling of the death of Earl Jewett, described as Doctor, Soldier, Manager of a Telephone Company bearing his name, Churchman, Mason, Shrine, Scottish Rite, Father, Grandfather, passing through the final gate and on his way.

Lately I read where some scientist stating that sound does not cease traveling but continues on and comparing its slow speed with electricity and light stated that he anticipated the time when one would be able to listen to sounds made before we were born.

I can picture some young boy twisting the dials of his sound recovery instrument and idely picking up Lincoln's Memorial Address, the oration over Ceaser and then the strangest whistling concert of a lonely boy down the street of a sleeping town at he trudges homeward, with only a cold moon and frosty roof tops to catch the sound and I am sure that the boy of the future will not turn off the concert until it is completely finished. (1958)

#

FARMER (continued from page 1)

there on the floor was the best bird dog in the country. The Texan allowed as how he had some good dogs, but what will yours do?

About that time a boy passed by and the Arky's dog hit a perfect point on the boy. "See what I tole you, that boy has a quail in his pocket." "Hey, boy, come here," "You got a quail in your Pocket?"

"No, sir". "Did you have quail for lunch?" "No, sir." "When did you last see a quail?" "Not for six months sir." "What's your name boy?" "Bob White, sir."

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Society. The play was an adap-
tion from the Hoosier School-
master, written and directed by
Anna Jo Foley. She did a fine
job. The performers got by
without any vegetables being
thrown. In all, the program
was quite well received by an
enthusiast audience. As of this
date, there has been no clamor
for a repeat performance. A
fine spread of refreshments were
provided by a committee of Diana
Springmeyer, Rheadawn Metz, Mary
Doles, Ruby Ernstes, Steve
Stradley, & Lorena Maddux.
Performers were:

Jim Smith	Duane Maddux
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MEMORIAL

In memory of Elizabeth Woodfill,
a charter member, from Mrs. W.
Hunter Robbins.

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An Arkansas farmer and bird hunter
went into East Texas for some bird
shooting.

He arranged with a Texas farmer
who was also an avid bird hunter
with lots of ground cover and
birds to spend a pleasant day
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While they were talking over a
bourbon and branch, the Arky told
his companion that his dog laying
**CONTINUED on page 7, see FARMER

THE EXPLOSION

By:

WILLIAM PARKER

The Natural Gas field of Indiana composes about twenty five hundred square miles, a part of eastern Indiana about one hundred miles long by seventy miles wide with an irregular outline. It is divided in a north section and a south section. The south section is composed of Marion, Hancock, Henry, Wayne, Rush, Shelby and Decatur Counties, with Decatur County being the southern tip.

This field is underlaid with a dolomite limestone rock called Trenton rock. This is found eight to nine hundred feet below the surface and is the rock holding the gas. Some parts of the field contain trenton which is very porous and in our county it is very hard. When the drill penetrates it, the gas escapes slow so the strongest flow is in the north section, which was depleted first.

Experimental drilling was commenced in latter 1870 for coal, but gas was discovered and the gas boom soon started. Companies were organized, speculators took over the drilling was fast and furious.

In Greensburg, three gas companies were in operation. First, the Greensburg Natural Gas Company with twenty five wells. Second, Greensburg Gas and Electric Company with thirty wells. And then the Muddy Fork Gas Company with thrity five wells. Average depth was eight hundred and fifty to nine hundred feet. At this time there were also companies operating in Clarksburg, New Point, Adams, St. Paul, Sandusky and Westport and a hundred or more private wells sunk and owned by farmers for their individual use. In addition I find ten more in the county, one Newton Natural Gas Company, Dallie Tillson owner, Florine's Father.

I grew up in Greensburg around the turn of the century, as a bountiful supply of natural gas was available to all the citizens of the city for lighting, cooking and some heating in cold weather. We used wood and later a big base burner that burned anthracite coal. This gas was run through a gas meter and sold for fifteen cents per thousand cubic feet, which was very reasonable. Stanley Knarr was the meter reader. Many older citizens will remember him walking up and down the streets with his cane and leather putties to protect him from the unfriendly dogs. Of all the unhandy places to place a gas meter, ours was in the corner of the press in our living room. Stanley had our permission to come in and read the meter without knocking. Dad had a big strong woman caring for my mother at the time and she came in the room and saw the rear end of a man protruding from the press and was about to tackle him when he emerged with his flashlight and explained who he was. I wonder if it is still there. Much of this Greensburg gas was from right at home, for several wells were drilled within the city limits. I think I could find some of them, but I doubt that they are still producing.

The farmers of our county also shared the privilege of using cheap fuel. In many localities, every well to do farmer had his own individual gas well. Since Clara and I went to housekeeping in

1921, in the southeast corner of Clay Township, we have had gas wells all around us, about one every half mile or closer. We held out until 1935, when Dad decided it was time to drill, so we secured the services of Mr. Tom Castor, of Sardinia. He was an experienced driller who still had his own well rig powered by an upright steam engine. With Tom as driller and his son as fireman, we have a gaswell eight hundred and sixty five feet deep showing two hundred and fifty to three hundred pounds of rock pressure. Drilled about eight or nine feet into Trenton, the gas holding rock. The driller is very careful to avoid drilling through the Trenton, which could let salt water fill the well. This is a matter of a little experience or just pure luck, as the thickness of the layer varies at different places. We piped the gas in our home and east to my brother Robert's home some one half mile. We laid the axes and cross cut saws away and have not cut a stick of wood since. We have used this for nearly fifty two years without any problems, no leaks or rusted pipes. We are very thankful.

It is surprising so few accidents have happened, and these that did occur have been mostly caused by poor house plumbing. The supervisor of Natural Gas says, "The condition of some of the pipe lines extending over parts of the field is bad, especially in what is known as farmers plants. Leaks can be found at nearly every joint. These have been laid down hastily and by inexperienced men".

The worst accident I can think of in Greensburg was the explosion at Minears Store. Gas was detected in the basement and Jim Dashiell was called to investigate. He went to the basement with a lighted candle and soon found it. The back end of the store landed in the alley, two clerks were seriously injured and Jimmy fortunately was not badly hurt, only lost his hair. This was many years ago.

In many parts of the field we find gas escaping through the earth and bubbling up through the water in streams. I don't know for I have not been there for over fifty years, but at one time, just below where Rodney Creek joined Sandcreek in Marion Township, gas was bubbling up. Enough of the boys kept it lit most of the time. The great upheaval of earth and rocks and the explosion which followed, south of Waldron near the Van Pelt Cemetery, August 11, 1890, was attributed to the gas escaping through the shales and leaks below the packers from the wells at Waldron and St. Paul. The gas escaping literally through the shales, collected until the pressure became so great to cause the upheaval. This was an event of great interest and was visited by many people. I recall hearing my parents tell of driving over from Milroy, before they were married, to view this explosion site. Also, the pond in Flatrock at Downeyville was said to have been formed by a gas blowout. The waste from these causes has resulted to vast injury, by reducing the pressure and allowing the introduction of salt water into the wells, which ruins the well.

It might be well to mention some of the more prominent men who drilled these wells. I will have to do this from memory as I remember them, for I have no list. I will probably leave out some who should be included. Most of the county wells were dug by local people. The earliest was no doubt, Noah Dashiell and his son Jim, and they were active for many years. In Greensburg there was Burney Rimstead, who was also a well shooter, and his partner Ira Bird. Benny was a nephew of Noah. Arthur Rimstead was a good friend of mine and a

classmate at the old west building. Claude Conquest was also very active in the business. In Adams there was Captain Walker, Web Wright and Raymond Longstreet. In Sardinia there was Tom Castor, who dug our well. Probably his last. When the big rush for gas was on, the drillers worked around the clock, taking Sunday off. Originally, they had four legged wooden derricks put together with wrought nails and moving them from well to well. Later, they used a single long wood mast with guy wires for bracing. Power was usually steam. An eight or ten inch pipe to stone, then dropping off to six inches to shut water out. Tubing was usually two inch iron or wrought iron pipe and went down to trenton with a packer or sealer on the end, and if everything worked you had a dry well with plenty of gas and no water. I forgot to mention Willie McCarty, who dug mostly water wells but did drill two gas wells in our community in the 1950's with good results.

I mentioned previously that the trenton rock in the north half of the gas belt was very porous, the gas flowing easily out of the rocks pores, while in the southern section was very hard with no pores. This was especially noticeable in Decatur County. Someone came up with the idea that if you would blow this stone with a high explosion, cracks and fissures would result and the gas would escape into the well. Nitroglycerin was tried and worked well, this is a highly explosive, oily liquid, prepared by the action of nitric and sulfuric acids upon glycerine. Before this explosive was available commercially, a few gas well drillers made their own. Among them was Noah Dashiell, living three miles north of Greensburg on State Road 3. He had his operation on the east side of his farm on Muddy Fork. He stored this is hay mows and various out buildings on the farm. His formula: Cook ammonia and natural fat, probably lard or tallow mixed with sulfuric and nitric acids and glycerine. This mixture created considerable heat, so he had to have water available for cooling. It sounds hazardous to me. The only other man who manufactured this explosive in our county was Phillip (Smooth Bore) Mowerer, who had his operation below Turner's Corner, along Sand Creek. I wonder if he could be the Phillip Mowerer I went to school with in the old east end school in Greensburg.

Before autos and trucks, the explosives were transported by horse power. A spring wagon was fitted up with racks or cradles where the cannisters of explosives were strapped in. I have seen them traveling over the county and do not remember any danger signs on them. Later on the trucks, "EXPLOSIVES" and "DANGEROUS" in large letters was visible.

On arriving at the well, the shooter would sit a tripod over the well and lower the cans with a winch, very carefully. Then the go devil was prepared, a piece of round iron rod resembling a window weight with a hole bored in it to accept a stick of dynamite, capped with enough fuse to allow the go devil to reach the bottom before exploding. The fuse was lit and the go devil dropped, usually a small child of the family was granted the honor. Mom was selected, but was afraid she could not get away fast enough, so John Elie dropped it. In a few seconds, mud, water, rock shot in the air fifty or sixty feet. Tom Castor lit a broom and lit the gas which blazed up ten or fifteen feet. A Mr. Baker, who shot wells over

Ohio, Kentucky and Indiana for the American Glycerine Company, shot our well with sixty quarts, an average shot. Even the empty nitro cans were very dangerous and were destroyed by shooting with a rifle, sometimes blowing a hole in the ground four feet deep.

The nitro glycerine magazine was a little building owned by the explosive company on a little plot leased from Noah Dashiell. It was due west one fourth mile of State Road 3, in line with Noah's drive. Ira Bird was a licensed well shooter and had charge of the magazine. When his stock would get down to two hundred quarts, he would order five hundred more. The nitro came in ten quart, tall, square cans. Bird had a Model T pickup truck with a special padded box for transporting the explosive. Herbert Storms, an employee at the American Glycerine Company of Bradner, Ohio, was delivering Mr. Bird's order and had arrived at the magazine shortly after five o'clock P.M. on December 27, 1918, so it was probably dusk or dark. For some unknown reason the entire seven hundred quarts of nitro and some dynamite exploded in a terrific blast heard and felt all over central Indiana. Most people thought it was an earthquake. Only small bits of Mr. Storms and the truck were found. The remains of Mr. Storms were placed in a small shoe box and Mr. Bird delivered them to the widow and child at Bradner, Ohio. The blast rocked the entire countryside, shattering windows in homes within two miles. One plate glass window in a store in Milroy was broken. All the windows in the Dashiell home were broken. The tenant house on the west side of the road, and nearest to the blast, was occupied by Henry Hicks and family was badly damaged. The summer kitchen was blown away. Later Mrs. Hicks stated, "Mr. Hicks usually helped the driver unload the nitro and had just started down to the magazine. He stopped and returned to the house, just as he reached the steps and porch roof fell down and he had to use the other door. The kitchen cabinet was on the floor with everything spilled". As with tragedies of this kind, hundreds of people visited the scene and was a topic of conversation for months, and you still hear it mentioned occasionally. Besides the loss of life, the truck, the window panes, there was the loss of money from the explosive, which was now two dollars and fifty cents per quart, which is about seventeen hundred and fifty dollars.

Perhaps I should mention something about the size of the crater blown in the ground. Estimates ranged from fifteen feet up to forty feet, and a diameter of forty feet. I feel a depth of forty to fifty feet might be nearer right.

My son John, while measuring crops for the A.S.C., visited this site several times in the last few years and says that in spite of happening sixty eight years ago and being used as a family dump, it is still a very sizeable crater. Loren Sefton now owns the farm. After the explosion, the magazine was moved to the Bob Ramer farm, later owned by Thelma Bird. After a law suit, it was placed on the Thornburg farm, south on the Millhousen Road until it was abandoned locally. What few wells being drilled were shot by a shooter from the American Cyanide Company, bringing his nitro with him. Dynamite is still available locally, usually at the stone quarries and I understand proof of need has to be given. There was a little stone building east of the fire station where Ira Bird stored dynamite, it may still be there.

There are still many private farmer's wells in the county, furnishing some gas, mostly used for cooking, water heating and some heating. Greensburg is well supplied by gas piped in from Texas by the big and little inch lines which cross the south part of our county and brought in by the Indiana Gas Company.

In 1974, the Shawnee Oil and Gas Corporation of Texas came in and leased several hundred acres in Clay Township for gas exploration and drilled at least twelve wells, some with a fairly good flow. These did not meet their expectations for commercial use and were turned over to the farmer.

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THE BOY NEXT DOOR (Dr. Jewett)

By: C.A. Patton

When we moved out to the new house on East Main Street that Pulse and Son built for Grandpa and Grandma I was still in short pants. From April to November one wore only shirt, belt and pants; underwear, stockings, shoes, etc. belonged to Winter. A yard or so from my upstairs room was a maple tree to which soon became attached a rope, by which you could swing to the picket fence next door. This was a quicker exit than by the stairs and less observed by the family. If the rope was in the window it ment: at home, if on the fence, it ment away some where. The fence, a picket one, separated us from Jewetts. Against this fence was a demounted affair which we would today call a trailer. It had been used in selling pattert medicine and at times to take and sell tintypes, at county fairs. It was then used as a warehouse to store telephones invented before Bell brought out his electric one. These of Jewett's were not electric apparatus but depended on vibration illustrated by listening to a distant train by putting your ear to the rail, or scratching one end of a bamboo pole and listening to the sound plainly audible that could not be heard through the air. The senior Jewett, this showed, was a dabler in chemicals which he used in photography and in compounding his patented cure-all which he manufactured on the spot, as well as an inventor. He had whiskers and was seldom seen. His wife wore blue jeans and a mans shirt that hung out. A common sight a few years back but at that time was unknown. The two older children had left the nest and there was Earl the lad a couple of years older than me.

A couple of years is a lot of difference at that age, later on would amount to nothing. There are boys that are outstanding to other boys. I remember one lad that could move his scalp like a horse that wants to shake off a horse fly that it can't switch with its tail. A phenomenon and his control was startling. Must have made a weird effect upon a teacher looking at one of his pupils to see the boys forehead practically disappear, the hair above come down to the eyebrows and transform him momentarily into a Neanderthal pigmy. Another lad could wiggle his ears. Have since learned that all normal people have muscular equipment extending above and behind the ear which at one time was used principally to cock the ear like a dog. But this boy was different. Earl Jewett could whistle like nobody you ever heard. His range was astounding. He was tone perfect, he could charm a bird, he could imitate the chime whistle that blew every

day at Emmerts mill telling the weather we were to have. He was a quiet lad, had no enemies, but had no group of friends, came home late at night, and there are nights that you can hear footsteps far down the street. Italian opera, alpine horns, Swiss yodlers stopped suddenly by a blue jay cursing a robbin and ending with some devine notes of the cantor in the temple.

Grover Cleveland was no longer president, I had left the old town and had lived many years in each of two cities, my people have died and I have grown older and older, but at no time did I ever hear a word of Earl, and never wondered what became of him. Today I received a paper from the old town telling of the death of Earl Jewett, described as Doctor, Soldier, Manager of a Telephone Company bearing his name, Churchman, Mason, Shrine, Scottish Rite, Father, Grandfather, passing through the final gate and on his way.

Lately I read where some scientist stating that sound does not cease traveling but continues on and comparing its slow speed with electricity and light stated that he anticipated the time when one would be able to listen to sounds made before we were born.

I can picture some young boy twisting the dials of his sound recovery instrument and idely picking up Lincoln's Memorial Address, the oration over Ceaser and then the strangest whistling concert of a lonely boy down the street of a sleeping town at he trudges homeward, with only a cold moon and frosty roof tops to catch the sound and I am sure that the boy of the future will not turn off the concert until it is completely finished. (1958)

#

FARMER (continued from page 1)

there on the floor was the best bird dog in the country. The Texan allowed as how he had some good dogs, but what will yours do?

About that time a boy passed by and the Arky's dog hit a perfect point on the boy. "See what I tole you, that boy has a quail in his pocket." "Hey, boy, come here," "You got a quail in your Pocket?"

"No, sir". "Did you have quail for lunch?" "No, sir." "When did you last see a quail?" "Not for six months sir." "What's your name boy?" "Bob White, sir."

MEMBERSHIPS and MEMORIALS

Historical Society of Decatur County, Inc.
P.O. Box 163 Greensburg, IN. 47240

Yearly Membership \$5.00
Life Membership \$100.00

Payable by January 1st.

☒ Renewal ☐ New

☐ Gift ☐ Life

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CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

IF GIFTS: From _____ Address _____

MEMORIALS

In Memory of _____ Comments _____

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521 West St. City
Phone: 663-2942
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2nd. V. Pres.....Readawn Metz
Rec. Sec.....Diana Springmier
Cor. Sec.....Peg Miller
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Robert Conwell
Allan Beall
Diana Swegman

EDITOR OF BULLETIN

Van P. Batterton
525 N. Broadway
Greensburg, IN: 47240

HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF
DECATUR COUNTY, INC.
P.O. BOX 163
GREENSBURG, INDIANA 47240

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Jackie Mendenhall
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Lee Lauderdale
663-2769

SOCIETY'S AGENT

William H. Robbins

COUNTY HISTORIAN

Dale Myers
663-4370

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THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF DECATUR COUNTY

Vol. 4 , No. 110 Greensburg, Indiana APRIL 1987

OCCASION: Twenty-eighth Annual
Dinner Meeting.

DATE: Saturday, April 11th.
1987 at 6:30 P.M.

DINNER: Ladies of the Presby-
terian Church. The
Dinner is \$5.00 each.
Please reserve by
check. Send it to
Ruth McClintic, 632
W. First St. Greensburg,
IN. The deadline is the
evening of April 8th.

PROGRAM: A panel discussion conduct-
ed by several members of the Society.
The moderator will be Pat Smith, a
director of the local organization.
This will cover several aspects of
county history. It is bound to be
very entertaining, and may touch
on some things that aren't too
well known. Of course there is a
fine dinner to fall back on.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Mrs. Donald (Jean) Oljace
Mrs. Fred (Helen) Craig
Jane F. Murphy- Columbus, IN.
Loren Marlowe
John Stewart
Mrs. John (Alberta) Stewart
Elbert Spillman
Howard Parker
Mrs. Stanley(Elizabeth)Reed
Mrs. Darol (Toni) Collins
Mabel M. Webb-Indianapolis

THANK YOU, a big one to DELTA
FAUCET for being so generous in
printing and assembling The
Bulletin for the Historical
Society, and all free of charge.

MUSEUM OPENING - will be on Mem-
orial Day, and be open Friday &
Sunday afternoons, 1-4 P.M.
thru September.

FOR SALE-There are still copies
of the New Decatur County History
Book & the reprint of the Harding's
History of Decatur County for sale
at Maddux's Auction Barn.

WINTER MEETING was held at the
Baptist Church, Sunday afternoon
Jan. 25th with over 125 faith-
ful members and guests in atten-
dance. The program consisted of
a play put on by members of the
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On arriving at the well, the shooter would sit a tripod over the well and lower the cans with a winch, very carefully. Then the go devil was prepared, a piece of round iron rod resembling a window weight with a hole bored in it to accept a stick of dynamite, capped with enough fuse to allow the go devil to reach the bottom before exploding. The fuse was lit and the go devil dropped, usually a small child of the family was granted the honor. Mom was selected, but was afraid she could not get away fast enough, so John Elie dropped it. In a few seconds, mud, water, rock shot in the air fifty or sixty feet. Tom Castor lit a broom and lit the gas which blazed up ten or fifteen feet. A Mr. Baker, who shot wells over

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Perhaps I should mention something about the size of the crater blown in the ground. Estimates ranged from fifteen feet up to forty feet, and a diameter of forty feet. I feel a depth of forty to fifty feet might be nearer right.

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THE BOY NEXT DOOR (Dr. Jewett)

By: C.A. Patton

When we moved out to the new house on East Main Street that Pulse and Son built for Grandpa and Grandma I was still in short pants. From April to November one wore only shirt, belt and pants; underwear, stockings, shoes, etc. belonged to Winter. A yard or so from my upstairs room was a maple tree to which soon became attached a rope, by which you could swing to the picket fence next door. This was a quicker exit than by the stairs and less observed by the family. If the rope was in the window it ment: at home, if on the fence, it ment away some where. The fence, a picket one, separated us from Jewetts. Against this fence was a demounted affair which we would today call a trailer. It had been used in selling pattert medicine and at times to take and sell tintypes, at county fairs. It was then used as a warehouse to store telephones invented before Bell brought out his electric one. These of Jewett's were not electric apparatus but depended on vibration illustrated by listening to a distant train by putting your ear to the rail, or scratching one end of a bamboo pole and listening to the sound plainly audible that could not be heard through the air. The senior Jewett, this showed, was a dabler in chemicals which he used in photography and in compounding his patented cure-all which he manufactured on the spot, as well as an inventor. He had whiskers and was seldom seen. His wife wore blue jeans and a mans shirt that hung out. A common sight a few years back but at that time was unknown. The two older children had left the nest and there was Earl the lad a couple of years older than me.

A couple of years is a lot of difference at that age, later on would amount to nothing. There are boys that are outstanding to other boys. I remember one lad that could move his scalp like a horse that wants to shake off a horse fly that it can't switch with its tail. A phenomenon and his control was startling. Must have made a weird effect upon a teacher looking at one of his pupils to see the boys forehead practically disappear, the hair above come down to the eyebrows and transform him momentarily into a Neanderthal pigmy. Another lad could wiggle his ears. Have since learned that all normal people have muscular equipment extending above and behind the ear which at one time was used principally to cock the ear like a dog. But this boy was different. Earl Jewett could whistle like nobody you ever heard. His range was astounding. He was tone perfect, he could charm a bird, he could imitate the chime whistle that blew every

day at Emmerts mill telling the weather we were to have. He was a quiet lad, had no enemies, but had no group of friends, came home late at night, and there are nights that you can hear footsteps far down the street. Italian opera, alpine horns, Swiss yodlers stopped suddenly by a blue jay cursing a robbin and ending with some devine notes of the cantor in the temple.

Grover Cleveland was no longer president, I had left the old town and had lived many years in each of two cities, my people have died and I have grown older and older, but at no time did I ever hear a word of Earl, and never wondered what became of him. Today I received a paper from the old town telling of the death of Earl Jewett, described as Doctor, Soldier, Manager of a Telephone Company bearing his name, Churchman, Mason, Shrine, Scottish Rite, Father, Grandfather, passing through the final gate and on his way.

Lately I read where some scientist stating that sound does not cease traveling but continues on and comparing its slow speed with electricity and light stated that he anticipated the time when one would be able to listen to sounds made before we were born.

I can picture some young boy twisting the dials of his sound recovery instrument and idely picking up Lincoln's Memorial Address, the oration over Ceaser and then the strangest whistling concert of a lonely boy down the street of a sleeping town at he trudges homeward, with only a cold moon and frosty roof tops to catch the sound and I am sure that the boy of the future will not turn off the concert until it is completely finished. (1958)

#

FARMER (continued from page 1)

there on the floor was the best bird dog in the country. The Texan allowed as how he had some good dogs, but what will yours do?

About that time a boy passed by and the Arky's dog hit a perfect point on the boy. "See what I tole you, that boy has a quail in his pocket." "Hey, boy, come here," "You got a quail in your Pocket?"

"No, sir". "Did you have quail for lunch?" "No, sir." "When did you last see a quail?" "Not for six months sir." "What's your name boy?" "Bob White, sir."

MEMBERSHIPS and MEMORIALS

Historical Society of Decatur County, Inc.
P.O. Box 163 Greensburg, IN. 47240

Yearly Membership \$5.00
Life Membership \$100.00

Payable by January 1st.

☐ Renewal

☐ New

☐ Gift

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MEMORIALS

In Memory of _____ Comments _____

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2nd. V. Pres.....Readawn Metz
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Cor. Sec.....Peg Miller
Treas.....Ruth McClintic

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EDITOR OF BULLETIN

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525 N. Broadway
Greensburg, IN: 47240

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DECATUR COUNTY, INC.
P.O. BOX 163
GREENSBURG, INDIANA 47240

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Dale Myers
663-4370

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/THE BULLETIN/

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF DECATUR COUNTY

Vol. 4 , No. 110

Greensburg, Indiana

APRIL 1987

OCCASION: Twenty-eighth Annual
Dinner Meeting.

DATE: Saturday, April 11th.
1987 at 6:30 P.M.

DINNER: Ladies of the Presby-
terian Church. The
Dinner is \$5.00 each.
Please reserve by
check. Send it to
Ruth McClintic, 632
W. First St. Greensburg,
IN. The deadline is the
evening of April 8th.

PROGRAM: A panel discussion conduct-
ed by several members of the Society.
The moderator will be Pat Smith, a
director of the local organization.
This will cover several aspects of
county history. It is bound to be
very entertaining, and may touch
on some things that aren't too
well known. Of course there is a
fine dinner to fall back on.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Mrs. Donald (Jean) Oljace
Mrs. Fred (Helen) Craig
Jane F. Murphy- Columbus, IN.
Loren Marlowe
John Stewart
Mrs. John (Alberta) Stewart
Elbert Spillman
Howard Parker
Mrs. Stanley(Elizabeth)Reed
Mrs. Darol (Toni) Collins
Mabel M. Webb-Indianapolis

THANK YOU, a big one to DELTA
FAUCET for being so generous in
printing and assembling The
Bulletin for the Historical
Society, and all free of charge.

MUSEUM OPENING - will be on Mem-
orial Day, and be open Friday &
Sunday afternoons, 1-4 P.M.
thru September.

FOR SALE-There are still copies
of the New Decatur County History
Book & the reprint of the Harding's
History of Decatur County for sale
at Maddux's Auction Barn.

WINTER MEETING was held at the
Baptist Church, Sunday afternoon
Jan. 25th with over 125 faith-
ful members and guests in atten-
dance. The program consisted of
a play put on by members of the
Society. The play was an adap-
tation from the Hoosier School-
master, written and directed by
Anna Jo Foley. She did a fine
job. The performers got by
without any vegetables being
thrown. In all, the program
was quite well received by an
enthusiast audience. As of this
date, there has been no clamor
for a repeat performance. A
fine spread of refreshments were
provided by a committee of Diana
Springmeyer, Rheadawn Metz, Mary
Doles, Ruby Ernstes, Steve
Stradley, & Lorena Maddux.
Performers were:

Jim Smith	Duane Maddux
Van Batterton	Bill Hunter
Marge Hunter	Juanita Beall
Rheadawn Metz	Henry Ernstes
Allan Beall	John Parker
Oliver Hunter	Mary Lou Bausback
Nancy Gilliland	Ralph Swegman
Ryan Maddux	Marlin Maddux
Peg Miller	Morgan Miers
Orville Pitts	Diana Swegman
Bill Robbins	Earl Vanderbur
Gloria Austin,	narrator.

MEMORIAL

In memory of Elizabeth Woodfill,
a charter member, from Mrs. W.
Hunter Robbins.

=====

An Arkansas farmer and bird hunter
went into East Texas for some bird
shooting.
He arranged with a Texas farmer
who was also an avid bird hunter
with lots of ground cover and
birds to spend a pleasant day
hunting.

While they were talking over a
bourbon and branch, the Arky told
his companion that his dog laying
**CONTINUED on page 7, see FARMER

THE EXPLOSION

By:

WILLIAM PARKER

The Natural Gas field of Indiana composes about twenty five hundred square miles, a part of eastern Indiana about one hundred miles long by seventy miles wide with an irregular outline. It is divided in a north section and a south section. The south section is composed of Marion, Hancock, Henry, Wayne, Rush, Shelby and Decatur Counties, with Decatur County being the southern tip.

This field is underlaid with a dolomite limestone rock called Trenton rock. This is found eight to nine hundred feet below the surface and is the rock holding the gas. Some parts of the field contain trenton which is very porous and in our county it is very hard. When the drill penetrates it, the gas escapes slow so the strongest flow is in the north section, which was depleted first.

Experimental drilling was commenced in latter 1870 for coal, but gas was discovered and the gas boom soon started. Companies were organized, speculators took over the drilling was fast and furious.

In Greensburg, three gas companies were in operation. First, the Greensburg Natural Gas Company with twenty five wells. Second, Greensburg Gas and Electric Company with thirty wells. And then the Muddy Fork Gas Company with thrity five wells. Average depth was eight hundred and fifty to nine hundred feet. At this time there were also companies operating in Clarksburg, New Point, Adams, St. Paul, Sandusky and Westport and a hundred or more private wells sunk and owned by farmers for their individual use. In addition I find ten more in the county, one Newton Natural Gas Company, Dallie Tillson owner, Florine's Father.

I grew up in Greensburg around the turn of the century, as a bountiful supply of natural gas was available to all the citizens of the city for lighting, cooking and some heating in cold weather. We used wood and later a big base burner that burned anthracite coal. This gas was run through a gas meter and sold for fifteen cents per thousand cubic feet, which was very reasonable. Stanley Knarr was the meter reader. Many older citizens will remember him walking up and down the streets with his cane and leather putties to protect him from the unfriendly dogs. Of all the unhandy places to place a gas meter, ours was in the corner of the press in our living room. Stanley had our permission to come in and read the meter without knocking. Dad had a big strong woman caring for my mother at the time and she came in the room and saw the rear end of a man protruding from the press and was about to tackle him when he emerged with his flashlight and explained who he was. I wonder if it is still there. Much of this Greensburg gas was from right at home, for several wells were drilled within the city limits. I think I could find some of them, but I doubt that they are still producing.

The farmers of our county also shared the privilege of using cheap fuel. In many localities, every well to do farmer had his own individual gas well. Since Clara and I went to housekeeping in

1921, in the southeast corner of Clay Township, we have had gas wells all around us, about one every half mile or closer. We held out until 1935, when Dad decided it was time to drill, so we secured the services of Mr. Tom Castor, of Sardinia. He was an experienced driller who still had his own well rig powered by an upright steam engine. With Tom as driller and his son as fireman, we have a gaswell eight hundred and sixty five feet deep showing two hundred and fifty to three hundred pounds of rock pressure. Drilled about eight or nine feet into trenton, the gas holding rock. The driller is very careful to avoid drilling through the trenton, which could let salt water fill the well. This is a matter of a little experience or just pure luck, as the thickness of the layer varies at different places. We piped the gas in our home and east to my brother Robert's home some one half mile. We laid the axes and cross cut saws away and have not cut a stick of wood since. We have used this for nearly fifty two years without any problems, no leaks or rusted pipes. We are very thankful.

It is surprising so few accidents have happened, and these that did occur have been mostly caused my poor house plumbing. The supervisor of Natural Gas says, "The condition of some of the pipe lines extending over parts of the field is bad, especially in what is known as farmers plants. Leaks can be found at nearly every joint. These have been laid down hastily and by inexperienced men".

The worst accident I can think of in Greensburg was the explosion at Minears Store. Gas was detected in the basement and Jim Dashiell was called to investigate. He went to the basement with a lighted candle and soon found it. The back end of the store landed in the alley, two clerks were seriously injured and Jimmy fortunately was not badly hurt, only lost his hair. This was many years ago.

In many parts of the field we find gas escaping through the earth and bubbling up through the water in streams. I don't know for I have not been there for over fifty years, but at one time, just below where Rodney Creek joined Sandcreek in Marion Township, gas was bubbling up. Enough of the boys kept it lit most of the time. The great upheaval of earth and rocks and the explosion which followed, south of Waldron near the Van Pelt Cemetery, August 11, 1890, was attributed to the gas escaping through the shales and leaks below the packers from the wells at Waldron and St. Paul. The gas escaping literally through the shales, collected until the pressure became so great to cause the upheaval. This was an event of great interest and was visited by many people. I recall hearing my parents tell of driving over from Milroy, before they were married, to view this explosion site. Also, the pond in Flatrock at Downeyville was said to have been formed by a gas blowout. The waste from these causes has resulted to vast injury, by reducing the pressure and allowing the introduction of salt water into the wells, which ruins the well.

It might be well to mention some of the more prominent men who drilled these wells. I will have to do this from memory as I remember them, for I have no list. I will probably leave out some who should be included. Most of the county wells were dug by local people. The earliest was no doubt, Noah Dashiell and his son Jim, and they were active for many years. In Greensburg there was Burney Rimstead, who was also a well shooter, and his partner Ira Bird. Benny was a nephew of Noah. Arthur Rimstead was a good friend of mine and a

classmate at the old west building. Claude Conquest was also very active in the business. In Adams there was Captain Walker, Web Wright and Raymond Longstreet. In Sardinia there was Tom Castor, who dug our well. Probably his last. When the big rush for gas was on, the drillers worked around the clock, taking Sunday off. Originally, they had four legged wooden derricks put together with wrought nails and moving them from well to well. Later, they used a single long wood mast with guy wires for bracing. Power was usually steam. An eight or ten inch pipe to stone, then dropping off to six inches to shut water out. Tubing was usually two inch iron or wrought iron pipe and went down to trenton with a packer or sealer on the end, and if everything worked you had a dry well with plenty of gas and no water. I forgot to mention Willie McCarty, who dug mostly water wells but did drill two gas wells in our community in the 1950's with good results.

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A couple of years is a lot of difference at that age, later on would amount to nothing. There are boys that are outstanding to other boys. I remember one lad that could move his scalp like a horse that wants to shake off a horse fly that it can't switch with its tail. A phenomenon and his control was startling. Must have made a weird effect upon a teacher looking at one of his pupils to see the boys forehead practically disappear, the hair above come down to the eyebrows and transform him momentarily into a Neanderthal pigmy. Another lad could wiggle his ears. Have since learned that all normal people have muscular equipment extending above and behind the ear which at one time was used principally to cock the ear like a dog. But this boy was different. Earl Jewett could whistle like nobody you ever heard. His range was astounding. He was tone perfect, he could charm a bird, he could imitate the chime whistle that blew every

day at Emmerts mill telling the weather we were to have. He was a quiet lad, had no enemies, but had no group of friends, came home late at night, and there are nights that you can hear footsteps far down the street. Italian opera, alpine horns, Swiss yodlers stopped suddenly by a blue jay cursing a robbin and ending with some devine notes of the cantor in the temple.

Grover Cleveland was no longer president, I had left the old town and had lived many years in each of two cities, my people have died and I have grown older and older, but at no time did I ever hear a word of Earl, and never wondered what became of him. Today I received a paper from the old town telling of the death of Earl Jewett, described as Doctor, Soldier, Manager of a Telephone Company bearing his name, Churchman, Mason, Shrine, Scottish Rite, Father, Grandfather, passing through the final gate and on his way.

Lately I read where some scientist stating that sound does not cease traveling but continues on and comparing its slow speed with electricity and light stated that he anticipated the time when one would be able to listen to sounds made before we were born.

I can picture some young boy twisting the dials of his sound recovery instrument and idely picking up Lincoln's Memorial Address, the oration over Ceaser and then the strangest whistling concert of a lonely boy down the street of a sleeping town at he trudges homeward, with only a cold moon and frosty roof tops to catch the sound and I am sure that the boy of the future will not turn off the concert until it is completely finished. (1958)

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FARMER (continued from page 1)

there on the floor was the best bird dog in the country. The Texan allowed as how he had some good dogs, but what will yours do?

About that time a boy passed by and the Arky's dog hit a perfect point on the boy. "See what I tole you, that boy has a quail in his pocket." "Hey, boy, come here," "You got a quail in your Pocket?"

"No, sir". "Did you have quail for lunch?" "No, sir." "When did you last see a quail?" "Not for six months sir." "What's your name boy?" "Bob White, sir."

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